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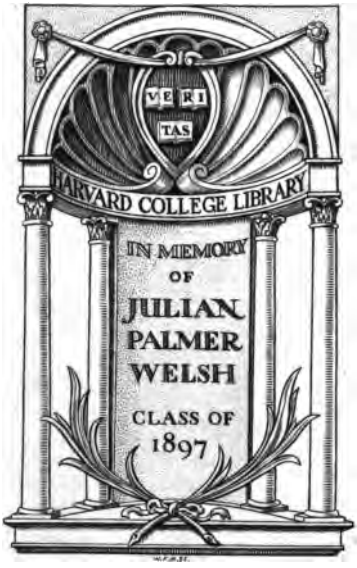
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WOODREVE MANOR:

OR,

SIX MONTHS IN TOWN.

WOODREVE MANOR:

OR,

SIX MONTHS IN TOWN.

A Tale of American Life,

TO SUIT THE

MERITS AND THE FOLLIES OF THE TIMES.

BY

MRS. ANNA HANSON DORSEY,
AUTHORESS OF "THE STUDENTS OF BLENHEIM FOREST," ETC.

What is noble? To inherit
Wealth, and fame, and proud degree?
There must be some other merit
Higher yet than these for me.
Something nobler far must enter
Into Life's majestic span;
Something to create and centre
TRUE NOBILITY in man! ANON.

PHILADELPHIA:
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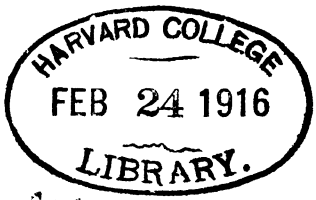

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WOODREVE MANOR.

CHAPTER I.

"There hath come a weary day,
When, overtasked at length,
Both Love and Hope beneath the weight give way;
Then with a statue's smile, a statue's strength,
Stands the mute sister, Patience, nothing loth,
And both supporting, does the work of both."

COLERIDGE.

Though haply o'er some of your brows, as o'er mine,
The snow-fall of Time may be stealing—what then?"

MOORE.

WITHIN a spacious apartment, where every object was thrown into startling *clare-obscure* by the fitful rays of a lamp which depended by a silver chain from the lofty ceiling, sat a lady, half reclining among the velvet cushions of a luxurious *fauteuil*. Her face, which was partially upturned to the light, was singularly noble in its outline. The dark, long eyelashes, which swept her cheek, and the heavy masses of pale brown hair, which fell waving over her shoulders to the floor, combined with the sombre color of her robes, and the motionless repose of her features, imparted to them the exquisite whiteness of fine marble. She was apparently tall, and judging from the velvet drapery which fell in folds of unstudied grace around her, finely and beautifully proportioned. One long, fair hand supported her cheek; the other hung by her side, the fingers of which closed and unclosed at intervals with such nervous violence as indicated not only life, but agony.

The fire, which the first frosts of October had made necessary for comfort, had burned out on the hearth, and only a heap of white ashes remained, bearing witness with the clock, which chimed one, of the lateness of the hour. As the low, sweet echo of Time softly resounded through the silent room, the lady unclosed her eyes, and pressed her hand to her forehead; then sat upright, and

looked for a moment around her, as if wondering at the desolation, and the midnight; and obeying some restless impulse, left her cushions and approached the casement. She grasped the heavy draperies, and drawing them quite back, a flood of moonlight, solemn and beautiful, streamed through the rich and transparent coloring of the delineations on the diamond-shaped glasses of the high-pointed windows. She opened the sash; and as a keen, fresh breath of wind stole noiselessly in, she folded her arms, and, unheeding the chill salutation, leaned against the deep embrasure of the window. As she gazed on the glittering frost-gems which quivered on every leaf, faint imitations of the fair jewels which shone in the gardens of heaven above, and heard the gentle breathing of the autumnal winds through the hoary trees of the forest, and the restless heaving of waves on the river's shore, an expression of agony gradually settled on her countenance, only subdued by a proud determination to endure silently, and blended sternly with the lineaments of her intellectual face. Neither Iphigenia at Aulis, nor Athalie in the Temple, looked more coldly beautiful in their hour of sacrifice, nor Zenobia more magnificent in her desolation, when, with a broken heart but untamed spirit, she decked in chains the triumphal procession of Aurelian, than did this silent watcher.

But the profound stillness was suddenly broken by the sound of wheels rolling rapidly over the gravelled drive, and in a few moments a coach drew up before the hall door; and the four horses, fatigued either by great speed or a long journey, panted and trembled as they stood.

"Do not ring nor knock," said a gentleman, springing from the coach, to his footman; "it will disturb the family."

"That voice," thought the unseen watcher, "surely, it cannot be——I have not heard it for years!"

"I," continued the midnight visitor, "know the place well; and if the night-lock has not been changed or altered, during these long years of absence, I can get in quietly. Aha! the key is at home, and now that I am sure of getting in without making a deuced noise to disturb the house, I will show you the way to the stables, where you fellows can make yourselves and the beasts comfortable."

He descended the broad stone steps, and preceded his carriage to the stables, where, after giving the necessary directions to his attendants, he returned, and, applying the key to the lock, opened the massive hall door softly, and entered; but started back, as he confronted the lady, who, with a small taper in her hand, had come there to receive him.

"Jasper!" she said, extending her hand, "welcome."

"God!" he exclaimed, starting back, "it cannot be Miriam!"

"Am I then so changed, Jasper? Enter the old homestead, my brother! You are truly welcome, though it is a sad anniversary you have chosen for your visit."

"You *are* changed, Miriam!" he replied, grasping her hand, and gazing with admiration on her strange beauty, which would have served the bold chisel of Phidias with a model for Minerva. "A thought too pale and sad-looking for one of your years. When I last saw you—"

"I was a foolish child; but come into my library. I have passed the night away somehow there, and was standing at the open window when you came. Sit down. I will waken my maid and have a fire lit, and refreshments brought."

"No, Miriam; for God's sake, don't! I am sorry to disturb you so; I wish I had come in the broad daylight; it looks so deuced like old times here, that I almost fancy I see shadows of the past flitting about me. I'll close that window," he said, shivering as he approached it. "A ghost might glide in with the moonshine, ha! ha! But let me go to my chamber, dear Miriam. I will not keep you up another moment. Such confounded nights as these are enough to change you! You ought not to mope so much alone."

"Listen, Jasper," she said, laying her cold white hand on his arm, and gazing steadily into his restless and uneasy eyes, "memory will not let me live alone. True, I am not gay; that would be mockery at any time, but madness on such an anniversary as this. Do you remember it?"

"Ah, yes; poor Vernon," he replied, turning his eyes away.

"No!" she exclaimed, almost gasping with agony, "poor Vernon's son! This night, twelve years ago, in the bloom of his childhood and beauty, this blossom, this solitary blossom of my lorn heart—this being who filled up the past, present, and future of my life with a quiet rapture—my child, Jasper—my only one, was stolen away; and I live to bear it!"

"It was a sad thing, Miriam," replied her brother, walking to and fro for a moment, "but cheer up! cheer up, my beautiful sister. Live for others. Make yourself happiness, by bestowing it on others."

"You will not chide me on the morrow, Jasper," she said, proudly; "I *do* live for others. The dark shadow of my life falls on none; no eye witnesses my woe save the sad angel who has walked unseen with me through life. I endure it with a semblance of patience and strength every hour throughout the year; but this

night! it is sacred to memory and misery. But others sleep while I watch, and the few tears I can shed do not even fall upon a flower. I suffer alone."

"Pardon me, Miriam; I wish you well, and respect your grief. I am only awkward in expressing what I feel. 'Pon my soul, though, I am sorry I've pained you, by breaking in so suddenly on you. I will not intrude a moment longer. Give me your little lamp; I know the way to my old chamber; good night; rest if you can," said her brother.

"It is better, perhaps, that we should meet on the morrow," she observed, handing him the lamp; "but pause one moment. Mr. Bedford is at Woodreve, and occupies your room; and Edith, my step-daughter, is in the one adjoining mine, over the drawing-room. Go into any other you may fancy; but do partake of some refreshment."

"No! no!" he said, hurriedly; "I supped late on the road; I had my own hamper with me. Spare yourself, Miriam, and retire."

"Say nothing to them on the morrow, dear Jasper, of finding me here thus," said the lady, kissing his cheek. "Good night."

As the day dawned, and the stars slowly paled amidst the purpled mists, Mrs. Willoughby, the widowed proprietor of Woodreve, retired noiselessly to her chamber, and after bathing her throbbing temples with *eau de Cologne*, she gathered up her beautiful hair, and wound it around her classically formed head, and lay composedly down, to rest a few moments ere the duties of the day began. And when Mr. Bedford and Edith entered the breakfast-parlor, at the usual hour, she was sitting calmly beside a cheerful fire, looking over the contents of the letter-bag, which had been just brought in. A gray silk morning dress, gathered around her waist by a band of black velvet, set off the fair proportions of her elegant person; and a small, finely wrought lace collar rivalled the whiteness of her faultless throat. No traces of the night's agony was on her countenance, and she returned their affectionate salutation and the compliments of the day with a quiet smile.

"My brother, Colonel Shirley, arrived last night at Woodreve, Mr. Bedford."

"Jasper! You amaze me! You had no intimation of his visit; but, God bless us! he's not the less welcome for that! I was awake until after twelve; why did you not send for me?"

"He would not allow me to waken even a servant, and no entreaty could prevail on him to partake of any refreshment. I am,

you know, a late sitter up at times, and recognized his voice when he spoke to his servant, instantly, and met him at the hall door."

"Well! well!" said Mr. Bedford, rubbing his thin white hands together with an expression of genuine pleasure; "I will be glad to see Jasper once more. Edith, darling! look between the leaves of that Plato, and hand me my spectacles; now the paper; there, thou fairest of Flora's handmaids, go among your flowers again." And then he settled himself comfortably in the beaded chair, and commenced poring over the *Daily Chronicle*, while Mrs. Willoughby quietly resumed her letter reading. Edith was a tall, splendid-looking girl of some seventeen summers, whose face, moulded in the loftiest and most exquisite style of beauty, indicated an impulsive and ardent temperament, and whose eyes, flashing and black, shone like two stars beneath their long silken fringes, while every perfect lineament revealed high-toned feelings and a refined intellectuality. A joyous smile, native, and seemingly in love with its own sweetness, was ever flitting around her dewy lips, and her rounded symmetrical form displayed an unconscious grace in every movement. Her raven hair, glossy and waving, was gathered up to the back of her head, revealing its fine outline, where it was fastened with a small gold comb; while a few curls, half shading her polished forehead, were carelessly turned behind her delicately and beautifully formed ears. A white morning dress, fastened on the bosom with a few October roses, and confined around the waist by a rich crimson ribbon, formed her becoming costume.

Mr. Bedford, *le vieil ami de maison*, pleaded guilty to having witnessed the snows of seventy winters, and his fine silken white hair testified to the truth of his assertion; but, somehow, there seemed to be a perpetual spring-time blooming, and a never wearying spirit, *le jeunesse*, keeping guard over his heart, which made evergreens of all its tendrils. He could not grow old. Probably his intercourse with the stars, for Mr. Bedford was devoted to the science of astronomy, kept bright within him the wheels of life; and in contemplation, year after year, of these lambent psalmists of the skies, who hymn forever in their Creator's ear their grand and solemn strains, he may have felt those ennobling sentiments of humility and docile faith which burnished up his simplicity of character until it was beautiful. The flowers, the rills, the mountains of earth, the sunlit palaces of the western skies, the busy ocean, and whispering winds, had their own sweet soft echo in the old man's loving heart. He was learned, and delighted most in the annals of classic lore; and if he had a fault on earth, it was a Spartan one, for of the history of that model republic he never

wearied; Lycurgus and his wisdom, the bravery of its men, the fortitude of its women, its code of stoical ethics, and its moral grandeur, were themes of unceasing interest to Mr. Bedford. The poet has sung of "faultless monsters which the world ne'er saw," and if he, with all his high excellences of character, had not indulged in a few eccentricities, he would have been the *rara avis* of mankind.

It was known that he was of high and ancient lineage, and that he received an annual income from certain properties in England, but this was all; he never talked of the past; and on one or two occasions, when he was questioned indirectly on the subject, he pretended not to understand a word that was said. When not at Woodreve, he lived in his own house in town, with one confidential man-servant, almost as ancient as himself, and a respectable old housekeeper, who enjoyed unusual privileges, and had the freedom of the whole mansion, except the region of telescopes and a mysterious apartment filled with galvanic batteries, retorts, and electrical machines, and whose walls were lined with huge cases containing minerals, musty-looking volumes, and not a few *curio's* in the shape of frightful reptiles coiled in glass bottles, some fine specimens of chrysolites, and rare gems, whose radiance was rendered more remarkable from being in close companionship with heaps of dusky meteorological stones, which acted as a fine foil to them. And it was well for the peace of Mrs. Grimshaw that these were precisely the two places on earth of which she had the greatest horror, they being associated, in her most unscientific mind, with ideas of demonology and witchcraft. Mr. Bedford took no pains to enlighten her, as he dreaded, more than any other vexation the *penates* could suggest, a daily irruption of brooms and dustpans within the precincts of his *sanctum*.

He had never altered the style of his dress, but still wore fine thread cambric wrist ruffles, and frills on his shirt-bosoms, while his small-clothes were fastened at the knees with small diamond clasps, and his square-toed shoes ornamented with a pair of capacious buckles of finely wrought gold; for it was an idiosyncrasy in his character, that, with all his devotion to science, he was fastidiously nice about his personal appearance. Edith sometimes dared to rally him on his antiquated style; but he would pleasantly reply: "The world, my darling, grows wiser every day, and will soon begin to respect me the more, merely because I am a well-preserved relic of antiquity."

He refolded the paper, exclaiming, impatiently, "One would fancy, who was not acquainted with the *modus vperandi* of the gauntlet which it seems necessary for all our candidates for political

honors to run, that all the eminent men and distinguished statesmen are the most monstrous villains living, so liberally does each party bespatter the other with Billingsgate filth. Patriotism is yielding to partisanship—a bad omen in a Republic. Such doings would never have been tolerated in Sparta. Miriam, is Jasper changed?"

"Yes, yes, my old friend," cried Colonel Shirley, who had entered unperceived, and was now grasping his hands—"changed, indeed. Grace has fled from me, and folds of vulgar fat usurped its place, and my head is sprinkled thick with a premature frost; but my heart, old friend—my heart, my affections, and all that sort of thing, are precisely the better, like old wine, you know, for the lapse of years."

"You are grown like your father, Jasper," said the old gentleman, warmly; "much, much like my dear Shirley. You are the more welcome for it, boy, for I loved and honored him."

"Thank you. Would that his virtues and greatness were mine! Miriam, I am so deuced glad to be here, you can't tell. Is *this* Edith, the baby Edith, whom I have so often tossed in my arms? D'ye remember the devilish romps we used to have together on the lawn? Give me a kiss, sweet Edith, for 'auld lang syne,' and another for myself."

And there was something so hearty and pleasant in his manner, that the laughing girl allowed him to encircle her in his arms, and press her glowing lips to his own. "God bless my soul, I have not been so happy for years. You're a perfect trump, Edith. *Ma belle mère*, you have a most charming step-daughter."

"Edith knows too well, my dear Jasper, the estimation in which I hold her, to be hurt at my silence when she is present," said Mrs. Willoughby, calmly. "But where is your son? He must be grown to man's estate, ere this."

"Grown! He's half a foot taller than his father, and the handsomest dog in Christendom," exclaimed Colonel Shirley, with pride.

"Why did you not bring the 'handsomest dog in Christendom' with you to Woodreve? I do not half like it. I suspect you have let the boy forget me," observed the lady, smiling.

"Deuce a bit of it. I left him in the city, to meet some political friends whom it is absolutely necessary for me to see, and to detain them there, if they come to-day, until my return to-morrow," he replied.

"To-morrow! The same *ignis fatuus* as ever, Jasper. It is unheard of," cried Mr. Bedford.

"Your visit is short, indeed, after twelve years' absence," said Mrs. Willoughby, gravely. "Let me replenish your cup?"

"Now don't; don't, Miriam, for Heaven's sake, put on such a *trenchant* look. I come to Woodreve to have a little confidential chat with you; but if you look so, I can never have the courage to negotiate with you. I will be frank, good friends, and tell you, as an apology for my flying visit, that I came expressly on business, leaving pleasure for a more unburdened season than I experience now," he said, in a deprecatory tone, and with a half sigh.

"Pardon me, dear Jasper. We will not cloud our brief interview with regrets, then," replied Mrs. Willoughby, in a kindlier tone.

"Do you never go to town, Miriam?" inquired Col. Shirley, abruptly.

"Occasionally on business I do."

The question, and all that it involved, interested every one. Mr. Bedford had been for the last year venturing quiet hints to Mrs. Willoughby, which she never noticed, about the necessity of introducing Edith into society; and the joyous young creature herself, though never expressing a wish on the subject, often sighed for those enjoyments in the world which are always, and under all circumstances, but too alluring to the inexperienced heart; but such was the exalted opinion she held of her step-mother's judgment and discretion, that, unless she had herself proposed, she would not have raised her finger to signify such a hope. Mr. Bedford set down the cream jug, and looked down very intently at the bubbles on the surface of his tea, and Edith stopped balancing the spoon on the edge of her cup, to listen, with a more roseate flush on her cheek, and a brighter sparkle in her downcast eyes, to the discussion of this interesting question. Her step-mother observed these things without seeming to do so.

"But do you never spend the winter in town? 'Tis high treason, 'pon my soul it is, to have such a blossom as Edith 'wasting her sweetness on the desert air.' Why don't you rebel, Edith?"

"There has never been any necessity for rebellion at Woodreve. Mamma always anticipates my wishes; and had I ever expressed a desire to winter in town, I know I would be gratified. But I am very happy here," she answered, smiling.

"Edith," exclaimed Col. Shirley, pinching her ear, "you know you are insincere, you little rogue; you are dying to be the belle of the town; but, go when you will, *la belle mère* will be your rival."

"Never; but always your friend, Edith," exclaimed Mrs. Willoughby, hastily.

"I do not precisely understand Col. Shirley, mamma; but if he means that you would be more admired than I, I'm sure he's right. Oh, it would be beautiful to hear every one saying: 'There is the elegant Mrs. Willoughby;' 'that is the handsome Mrs. Willoughby;' and 'Mrs. Willoughby is the finest woman in town.'"

"Edith," interrupted the lady, gravely, "the bare possibility of such notice would keep me at Woodreve forever. Never again, dear, have such fancies about one who cares less for the admiration of the world—nay, values it far, far less than she does the free winds of heaven. But answer me, frankly—are *you* anxious to go? I have been, perhaps, selfish in my seclusion; but if you express the wish, with the same truthful confidence that you have ever reposed in me, I will thank you."

"I have been very, very happy at Woodreve, and ought not, perhaps, to wish to leave it; but I will be sincere, mamma, and answer your question in the affirmative. But if I thought it would pain you, or throw you at all out of your way, I would rather a thousand times stay among my birds, and flowers, and the old trees at Woodreve, than go," she replied, looking earnestly in her step-mother's face.

"I believe you, Edith. Thank you, dear, for your candor," said Mrs. Willoughby, and she was silent.

"Edith," said Col. Shirley, laughing, "you are the strangest little wretch I ever saw. Were you ever in love?"

"Yes," she replied, merrily, as she crept behind Mr. Bedford's chair, and softly laid her hands over his eyes and kissed his white head; "I have been, oh, ever so long, in love with Mr. Bedford."

"You are only biding your time, darling," said the old gentleman, drawing her arms around his neck, and pressing the hands which had blindfolded him to his lips.

"And what says Mr. Bedford to our forsaking Woodreve?" asked Mrs. Willoughby, recovering from her abstracted mood.

"Some other time, dear lady, I will tell. Not now," he answered. "Col. Shirley, our lady of Woodreve has letters to answer, I know, by the portentous look of business she wore this morning when I came in. Suppose we leave her, and ride over the estate. It is the finest in Maryland."

"Yes, with pleasure," he said, pushing back his chair.

"Shall we not attend first to your business, dear Jasper?" asked Mrs. Willoughby.

"No, no; after dinner will do. I want a bite of keen air.

Edith, come. Have you not a riding-horse? Go with us," he replied, blithely.

"O yes, dear Colonel, the most spirited, gentle creature in the world. I will send and order her round, and accompany you," she exclaimed.

"The very thing I was going after myself. Come, Miriam, join the party; a canter over the place, this fine day, would do you good," said the Colonel.

"Excuse me, dear Jasper. I received a vexatious letter from my agent this morning, and an urgent one from my lawyer; they both require immediate notice. I will be quite disengaged, however, when you return. Edith, show your uncle all the fine views, and prevail on Mr. Bedford to condescend from the scenery of heaven, for one day, to the beauties of our lower world. He has gone round to the stables now; and do you run up and don your riding-habit."

"Does the old man watch the stars yet? D'ye remember the time, Miriam, I strung two threads of red silk across the lens of his telescope, and he announced gravely the next morning that he had discovered a new planet with a ring like Saturn, near the Bear? He's a regular old quiz," exclaimed the Colonel, laughing.

"He's an exalted and pure-hearted man, Jasper. I do remember that, and have not forgotten how he shamed your rude humor by presenting you, the very week after, on your birthday, with a handsome watch. You were a good boy for a little while after. But there is Edith at the hall door, equipped for her ride, chatting with Mr. Bedford," said the lady.

Edith looked beautiful in her close-fitting riding-habit and green velvet cap, from which waved two soft, snowy plumes, in fair contrast to the raven curls with which they mingled. Her eyes beamed with a glad but gentle expression from beneath their heavy fringes, and her ruby lips, half parted, revealed her white, regularly formed teeth; while her cheeks, of a delicate rose hue, were indented with dimples. She held up the ample skirt of her habit with one hand, and was smoothing back with the other a stray curl, when Col. Shirley exclaimed, "By Heaven, she's a splendid creature! I never saw such a magnificent pair of eyes. You *must* show her in town, Miriam."

"I will determine in a day or two; but say nothing more to her, dear Jasper, in the way of compliment. Edith is very beautiful; but it would forever mar her loveliness to be too conscious of it. And now, touching your business; remember our old affection, and that we are but two, and be assured of all that you wish, if I can aid you," she said, with an innate feeling of deli-

cacy, suspecting that pecuniary embarrassments had something to do with his sudden appearance at Woodreve.

"Thank you, Miriam," he said, with a peculiar smile, and grasping her hand a moment, joined Mr. Bedford and Edith, when they mounted their horses and cantered off.

Woodreve was, indeed, a fine old manorial-looking place. It was situated on a high eminence, which sloped gently down to the picturesque banks of a broad river. Mountains, some few miles off, towered loftily upwards, bathing their tops in the purple mists and clouds of the upper air, and formed a background of singular and romantic beauty. Belting the estate on the left, in solemn and majestic grandeur, stood the old primeval forest, which the proprietors of Woodreve had never desecrated with the woodman's axe; and stretching away to the right, lay rolling and undulating lands, which were fertile and highly cultivated, dotted here and there with clumps of shade-trees, underneath which gleamed the white-washed cottages and small plantations of the negro laborers. The shores of the river presented a continuation of beautiful scenery, sometimes rising in bold headlands, and, farther beyond, receding in lines of graceful loveliness, indented with miniature bays and willow-shaded coves. Vistas had been cut in various places of the estate, revealing glimpses of the distant mountains, the sunny river, and the waving fields, in fine and harmonious perspective, which, lit up by the morning beams, or gilded by the setting sun, presented more exquisite blending of light and shades over the view, than the finest Claude Lorraine ever exhibited. Among the sturdy and centenarian oaks, flourished the white-blossomed dogwood-tree, and the dark-leaved, odorous magnolia; while trailing vines of the yellow jasmine, the scarlet woodbine, and pale honeysuckle, hung their fragrant festoons from one gigantic bough to the other. There, also,

> "The trumpet-flower and grape-vine
> Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the ladder of Jacob,
> On whose pendulous stairs, the angels ascending and descending,
> Were the swift humming-birds that flitted from blossom to blossom."
>
> LONGFELLOW.

Two or three fountains, supplied from a mountain spring, gurgled forever amidst the shade; and showers of bright, sweet leaves, which every breath of wind scattered over them, made, as they passed over their gravelled beds, a blithe and tuneful accompaniment to the bird-notes which filled the woods with harmony. Like fond affections and tender feelings, gladdening the gathering

shadows of age, were all these fair and blooming creatures—these joyous sounds, amidst the hoary trees of that old primeval wood.

The mansion itself was built of old gray stone, after the quaint fashion of those old Elizabethan manor-houses which are so frequently seen among the secluded garden spots of England. High-pointed gables, and windows set deep within the heavy walls; three square turrets, in one of which was a fine-toned clock; and an observatory, modelled to correspond with the antique style of the building, imparted to it a still more imposing effect. Two gracefully-arched piazzas stretched across the main front of the upper and lower stories, which were well furnished with flowers and delicate shrubbery, and took away much of the otherwise cumbrous and heavy appearance of the mansion. The furniture was of an antique and remote date; the rich silver plate of a by-gone fashion; the china oriental and old, and the household servants gray-headed and respectable. There had been only one addition made to the pile, by the present proprietor of Woodreve, some years ago. This was a spacious and lofty apartment adjoining the western wing, and known by the household as the lady's library; but it was, in fact, a happily conceived idea of music-room, studio, and library combined, a spot where a refined woman's love for the beautiful was concentrated and apparent in every object. The windows, lancet-shaped, opened from the groined roof to the floor, and were filled with diamond-shaped glasses, which had been richly stained at great cost in Florence, with delineations which Mrs. Willoughby's own classical taste had designed. From one of these could be seen, glancing through a thick plantation of *arbor vitæ* and cypress-trees, an elegant mausoleum, which sheltered the tombs of her parents, the original proprietors of Woodreve. Between these rich windows, in a niche, there was a European copy, in marble, of Niobe, attempting to shield, with her own body, her last living child from the shafts of Apollo. In one recess stood a parlor-organ, with a drapery of crimson velvet thrown over it, almost concealing the exquisitely wrought ebony of the frame, which was elaborately inlaid with pearl. Over this hung, bought at a princely price from the gallery of one of the impoverished nobles of Italy, by herself, an original of Leonardi de Vinci, of *Madonna il Dolorosa*. A small cabinet, filled with antique coins, cameos, and finely executed miniatures, with a few rare gems, occupied the opposite recess, where, suspended against the wall, set deep in oval frames, were four *bijoux* of painting, after the old Dutch masters. A spacious Gothic bookstand, well filled with classic and modern lore, in French, Italian, and English; a large circular table, covered with well-used copies of

Dante, Milton, and the writings of Madame de Staël, and closely-written papers; seals, and elegant writing implements; a few luxurious *fauteuils;* a harp, and two or three flower-stands, completed the adornments of this sanctum, whose floor was covered with a Persian carpet, of so soft a woof that the heaviest footfall gave back no echo. The mind of the presiding genius, naturally of a superior caste, had been urged up, and further upwards towards the desolate regions of mere intellectuality, by sorrow which few can bear unsustained by Heaven, until her most beloved associates were the loftiest spirits of literature; and in close communion and with exalted pride, high above mundane pleasures and passions, she walked daily with them.

CHAPTER II.

Like dewy cobwebs glitt'ring in the sun,
His speech was all so fair, that none might see
The deadly spider lurking in its cell;
And she, meas'ring all natures by her own
Proud spirit, listened and believed.

"MIRIAM," exclaimed Col. Shirley, after the servants had been dismissed from the dining-room, and the family at Woodreve lingered over their dessert, "you have wonderfully improved the old place—made a perfect Eden of it! I never saw such system and order as prevail. How in the world do you manage? for your work-people are all negroes, and the cleanest, sleekest-looking devils I ever saw. I'm forever in a deuce of a humor with mine. They steal, idle away their time, and consume altogether much more than they are worth."

"You, my dear Jasper, are a Southerner by adoption," answered Mrs. Willoughby, smiling, "and will, doubtless, laugh at the secret of the system you so much admire; but as you seem interested, as a slaveholder, I will reveal it. I am, as you know, neither a Methodist nor a religionist of any kind, but believe firmly in the necessity of faith, and in the revelations of Christianity, for our peace here and hereafter. This, mark you, has become *a principle*, and, as such, I should be more than culpable in not affording my slaves an opportunity to avail themselves of certain established Christian institutions; so, as soon as the idea

became fixed in my mind that it was a duty, I engaged the regular services of a legally authorized person to baptize and instruct them and their children, and, by lessons seasonably administered, and precepts adapted to their condition, elevate their feelings and morals. It was an experiment only, but it worked well—quite as well as more expensive ones regarding the improvement of certain breeds of cattle, and the application of foreign and expensive manures to our soil. They are convinced that I estimate them a degree higher than I do my beasts of burden, and endeavor as much to respect themselves as to repay my care. I give them freely the time they would otherwise abstract to cultivate their little gardens and enjoy necessary recreation, and demand from them, in return, perfect regularity in the fulfilment of their duties, and a respectful attendance on the well-meaning man who instructs them. Instead of losing, I gain double. They give me no trouble."

"Lord!" exclaimed the Colonel, laughing; "I can fancy what a panic the sight of a parson would make among my rascals! The devil in *propria personæ*, in the full insignia of his occupation, with blazing eyes, horns, and a forked tail, would not terrify them half so much! But, do they never require punishment?"

"The more thoughtless and giddy sometimes do—"

"Aha! the lash *is* heard sometimes at Woodreve, then?"

"Never! Where every moral faculty is degraded by a besotted ignorance of their duties to God and man, it is probably as necessary for the negro as for the mule or ox; but that is a question which each slaveholder must settle with his own conscience. I have pursued a different course with mine, and no other punishment is ever necessary than the disgrace of being excluded entirely from the privileges of the rest—of being banned and losing caste for a little while. It answers the purpose much better, in my estimation, than corporal chastisement. But all this has been the result of patient and resolute efforts for years. Since we cannot remove the chains, let us teach them how to bear them, and be careful how we add scourges," said Mrs. Willoughby, earnestly.

"You were always a strange creature, Miriam," exclaimed her brother, looking with a dull expression of wonder at her.

"But," she continued, rising from the table, "a philosophic discussion of the best method of managing a plantation is not the object of your visit, dear Jasper, I fancy. Let us leave Mr. Bedford and Edith to drink each other's health and eat philopenas together, and go into my library to hold our private conference. And," she said, after they entered it, "give me the pleasure of

aiding you, my dear brother. You know my fortune is large and unincumbered—"

"No; deuce take me, Miriam, it's nothing of that sort, on my honor; but I thank you most kindly for your generous offers. It is quite another affair which has brought me to Woodreve, and one which I shall but awkwardly enough explain," said Col. Shirley, coloring. "My son Walter, you know, is the handsomest, most talented, and chivalric fellow in the whole South; generous-hearted, noble, and all that sort of thing. Well, the fellow wishes to settle himself in his profession, and is wife-hunting; but, fearing he would not make a judicious choice, I volunteered my services to aid him. I do not look like an envoy of Cupidon, with my *embonpoint* and my gray hairs, eh? I thought of a hundred girls, beauties, heiresses, and some who had only wit and accomplishments for their dower; but there was something to object to in all, for you must know Walter is devilish fastidious about women, and I was hanging on the horns of a dilemma when our little Edith popped into my head, and I determined at once to run up to Woodreve, on my way to Washington, give you a hug, take a peep at her, and if she was just the thing, and Walter fancies her, get your influence in the scale, and your consent for him to address her."

"And *is* Edith 'just the thing,' Jasper?" asked Mrs. Willoughby, proudly.

"Precisely! She goes through all her paces in fine style, and her head sits on her shoulders as proudly and gracefully as an Arabian filly's. She will hit Walter's fancy to a turn; and if we can lay our heads together and arrange the thing—why Walter's a generous fellow; he don't want her fortune; he's enough of his own from his mother; all he wants is a well-born, accomplished, beautiful wife, and to settle quietly down to the practice of his profession; for he's ambitious, and aspires to legal dignities, I must tell you; and, if I am not too partial, I think I may predict his entire success."

"Jasper," said Mrs. Willoughby, calmly, "you appear very sanguine about this matter; you seem to think there will be no difficulty in the way of Edith's taking the husband that we may provide for her; but it will be prudent, before you exhaust more breath on the subject, as I think I thoroughly understand your proposal, to define my position towards Edith, whose excellences you seem to measure by your *beau idéal* of a fine horse. She was left, unrestricted by any conditions, with her father's large fortune, to my care—my discretion—my *honor*—"

"Yes, yes; old Willoughby knew his confidence would not be misplaced."

"And," continued the lady, in the same calm tone, "revering the memory of this excellent man, and grateful to him for this same confidence, I have ever regarded the trust as a sacred one, and endeavored to perform my duty in the smallest minutiæ towards his child. And it has been no cold task; I have ever cherished for Edith the love of an elder sister, and my affections are returned tenfold by her, enriching my almost barren heart, and driving away an ascetic gloom from my seclusion. No occasion has ever occurred wherein I was compelled to control her inclinations and bend them to my own; she is naturally noble, amiable, and intellectual, and my task has been merely the guidance of a willing and loving heart. Her confidence in my judgment is unbounded, and her gratitude of such a fervid kind, that my slightest wish would be obeyed at any cost."

"Then there can be no difficulty. Walter will just suit your notions."

"But," continued the lady, in the same unmoved tone, "with all these advantages, nothing could compel me—no eloquence or interest could persuade me, to make an improper use of my influence. I could not, without infringing on my own pride of character—my own *honor*, Jasper—compel Edith's inclinations; and the circumstances must be of a most peculiar and forcible kind which will oblige me to disapprove of the object of her choice."

"You misunderstand me, Miriam; I do not wish you to *force* your step-daughter to marry Walter; I only asked your permission for him to address her. I fancy his good looks and mental advantages will influence Edith more than even you could do," said the Colonel, seriously.

"Possibly. Edith, however, is not so full of romance that she cannot discriminate; but there is nothing in your plan, Jasper, to disapprove of; only I thought it would be better for you to understand the position we relatively hold to each other—Edith and I. If your son is the admirable character you represent him to be, he would be a very proper match for her, if she could love him; for, understand me, I am old-fashioned enough to believe that love is a very necessary ingredient to wedded happiness. Indeed, on the whole, if the two who are most interested fancy each other, it would be a desirable thing. My father, our father, dear Jasper, would have had his last days much embittered by thinking that Woodreve would pass away from the possession of the Shirleys; and if this marriage *should* take place at some future period, the estate would be secured to them," said Mrs.

Willoughby, musingly. "But not even to effect so desirable a thing, would I influence Edith in an affair of such moment as marriage."

"It's all deuced fair," said the Colonel, rubbing his hands. "This day week he shall come to Woodreve, and show himself—"

"Hold, my dear brother. Edith has seen nothing of the world yet, and it would be taking an unfair advantage of her inexperience to introduce them *here*. I will be most happy to see my nephew. I *must* see him, and consult also with Mr. Bedford, before I can consent to receive him as Edith's suitor. I feel that I have been unjust to Edith, in not giving her all those advantages which her position commands. I had almost forgotten that her young heart was not, like mine, filled with the bitter ashes of past joys; and I have determined, with Mr. Bedford's approval, to spend this winter in town, for the especial purpose of introducing her into society. I have a fine mansion there, in a fashionable quarter, whither I will go, as early as my arrangements can be made to do so. Doubtless her beauty, her fortune, and accomplishments will bring many suitors around her; and it is only among these that I can consent for Walter to introduce himself in that character."

"I have no fears for Walter. He is just the fellow to please the women. I'm sure Edith will be over head and ears in love with him before she has seen him three times. They were intended for each other, and a beautiful match they'll be," cried the Colonel, in a cheerful voice. "And I'll be frank with you, Miriam; your hint about Woodreve makes me more anxious than ever for this marriage. Of course, Walter would secure it to Edith and her children; he has property enough without incumbering himself with more. It is all right and honorable, as you say, not to influence Edith's affections. I would not have you do it; deuce take me if I would. I must be off in the morning, and this day week I will send Walter to you for a day. You can send Edith off somewhere, if you do not wish them to meet, or lock her up until he goes. I'm for fair play as well as yourself."

"The subject being disposed of," said Mrs. Willoughby, "I wish you to promise me a long visit when we get to town, if you cannot make me one at Woodreve. I will let you know when we are settled, and hope you will obey my summons without delay. It would be unfair to invite Walter, you know, with you; but I shall expect daily and dutiful visits from him."

"You'll see enough of Walter—he will be an example to all the undutiful nephews in town; and mind, Miriam, give him a little sound advice sometimes, and counsel him after your kind

fashion, for I don't pretend to say he's faultless. You knew his mother died when he was a boy; he never knew her care," said Col. Shirley, in a sentimental voice.

"I had a son, Jasper—I will love yours," she replied, with emotion. "You proposed sending him this day week to Woodreve. Do so. Edith shall spend the day with a friend—there is no necessity for them to meet until we get to town."

"Edith, dear," said Mrs. Willoughby one morning, a week after Col. Shirley left Woodreve, "I expect a person on business to-day, and wish to be quite alone. Mr. Bedford has gone to town, and I'd be glad if you'll have Gazelle accoutred, and ride over to Markham's, and inquire how they all are. Markham was your father's confidential man of business for years, you know, and nothing gives them half so much pleasure as a visit from you."

"Oh, mamma! you don't know how very anxious I am to finish Mr. Bedford's slippers to-day! Will not to-morrow do?" said Edith, as with delicate fingers and exquisite taste she arranged her flowers among some variegated moss with which she had filled a silver tray.

"No, dear. To-morrow we commence active arrangements for our removal to the city for the winter. You can take the slippers over with you, and learn Amy the stitch," replied her stepmother.

"So I can. But oh, mamma, I am wild with joy! To the city, did you say, for the whole winter?" she exclaimed, throwing her arms around Mrs. Willoughby; "yes, I'll be off this moment to Markham's—indeed, mamma, you don't know how delighted I am!" she repeated, coming back to kiss her again.

"There, dear Edith," replied the lady, returning her caress, "hurry off. I doubt much whether you will not long more for the quiet happiness of Woodreve before spring, much more than you now do to leave it. But go, my love; give the good people at the farm time to make a dinner for you, or they'll be miserable."

Like a rose glowing beneath its leaves, glowed Edith Willoughby's face beneath the dark green velvet of her riding-cap, and the black glossy ringlets which floated carelessly over her cheeks defined perfectly their true oval outline. In graceful folds hung the ample skirt of her habit, sweeping away the dewdrops which still lingered on the grass, as Gazelle, proud of his light burden, cantered swiftly along; and with a color heightened by pleasure and the fresh bracing air, and a smile dimpling her cheeks while she sang gay snatches of song, it would have been difficult for poet or painter to imagine any earthly thing

more brightly beautiful. The great trees which stood like Ionic columns on each side of the road, as if to protect the Druidical-looking woods beyond, were rich with the variegated hues of autumn, and, interlacing their giant boughs above, only let through glimpses of sunshine and blue sky; while the birds, the improvident poets of their race, lingered still about their old haunts, now so gorgeously pavilioned, nor heeded the frosts and sharp night winds, but fluttering amidst their glowing coverts sang rejoicing hymns to the sun. Snowy rabbits darted like stray pearls among the long grass that skirted the road, and, looking for a moment with their great soft eyes at the maiden as she sang, sprang back to their hiding-places again; and the busy squirrels, waving their gray plumes like knights at a tourney, sprang from bough to bough, and shook down thick showers of rainbow-tinted leaves over her. Glimpses of the broad bright river shone at intervals between the foliage, and while she gazed with glad heart, and eyes whose depths grew more joyous in the light and beauty around her, Gazelle suddenly halted, and when Edith gently attempted to urge her on, reared and plunged after a strange fashion for one so uniformly gentle and docile.

"How now, Gazelle," she said, drawing the rein, and patting the graceful creature fondly on the neck, "wouldst throw thy mistress and break her neck, just when she expects to break so many hearts? Fie on thee, Gazelle! what a humor for a genteel pony to get into—there, so, so!" At that moment, she felt the saddle turning in time to spring to the ground and save herself from a severe fall. The sagacious animal stood perfectly still, although she had relinquished the reins, and held its head proudly up, as if indignant that his warnings should have been so slighted.

"Gazelle, on my honor, thou shalt be sent to college! Thou hast more wit than thy mistress, who might have known there was something wrong," she said, laughing merrily as she turned the light saddle over with her foot, as it lay on the ground where it had fallen, and discovered that the girth was broken. "We are now four miles from Markhams', and as I know nothing of a saddler's craft, and cannot devise any way on earth to cobble this girth together, we'll e'en trudge there afoot like two faithful friends in company. But here the saddle must lie."

She did not observe a gentleman on horseback, with a short Spanish cloak thrown over his shoulders, who had approached her so noiselessly over the soft-yielding turf that no echo sounded from his beast's hoofs until, lifting his cap from a broad, handsome forehead, he accosted her in a courteous manner and proffered his assistance. She looked startled for a moment, the suddenness of

the adventure deprived her of her usual well-bred self-possession, and blushing, while a smile lurked in the corners of her mouth, she cast down her eyes; but feeling that she was making her awkward position ridiculous, she raised them to the stranger's, and as courteously as it was offered declined his aid.

"Nay, lady, I am from a region where an incident like this would destroy at once any conventional objection to a stranger's assistance. I have been a ranger, too, over prairie and through forest, and am never unprovided with ways and means to remedy such ills as this. I am perfectly *au fait* not only with the art of repairing old saddles, but making new ones. Allow me—it is but a slight thing—only a moment's work."

And this was all said by the stranger with such a deferential air, and in so soft and pleasant a tone, as he dismounted from his horse—there was such a subdued expression of mirth on his handsome countenance, and a spirit shining forth from his eyes so nearly akin to her own—that she bowed her acquiescence, and allowed him to proceed with his self-assumed task, while she leaned against a tree and watched his movements. The most fastidious taste would have pronounced that his figure was eminently distinguished for its fine and graceful proportions, and his face, in all its lineaments, a perfect model of manly beauty. He took off his cap, and a wealth of dark chestnut curls fell over his temples; then unwound the silken cord which ornamented it; nor replied in any other way to Edith's deprecating gesture at the spoliation than by a careless smile. He next, with the small and highly-tempered blade of his penknife, punctured holes in the broken girth, and with the delicate-looking but strong cord laced the broken band compactly and firmly together; then placing the saddle on Gazelle's patient back, buckled it on, and led him to his mistress.

"Thank—thank you most sincerely," said Edith, with a beaming face: "I am only pained at the delay I have occasioned you."

"Delays, lady, *are* dangerous," he replied, as he stooped to hold the stirrups for her to mount. "I shall be more than rewarded, if you do not regret having allowed me to perform this small service. The chance, or incident rather, has been a providence to me—but I detain you. Allow me, lady, to ask which of yon two roads leads to Woodreve?"

"The one on the left; and, if you are going thither, ask my step-mother to thank you in proper terms for the service you have rendered Edith Willoughby," she said, as she bowed her graceful head, and galloped off. He looked keenly after her for a moment, then an expression of triumph and pleasure lit up every feature

of his face, and he exclaimed: "If this is she whom I am commanded by stern necessity to fall in love with, it is, by Heaven, no Herculean task. She will be a splendid appendage, even as a wife, to her gold and broad acres." This was Walter Shirley.

"Dear mamma," said Edith that evening, as she sat leaning on her step-mother's knee, "you heard of my adventure this morning? I fancy I looked like Dulcinea della Tobosa, over my broken saddle, and a young knight riding up to my assistance!"

"Yes, dear. The gentleman mentioned that he had been so happy as to render you some slight assistance," said Mrs. Willoughby, fondly smoothing Edith's hair with her hand.

"May he never want a friend in his need! He looked like a perfect hero of romance—his portrait would have been a treasure to Mrs. Radcliffe!" replied Edith, laughingly.

"I hope you did not, my love, after the approved fashion in romances, lose your heart with this handsome stranger?"

"No. I never wish to be in love, mamma. All that I have read of it is so full of misery, trials, and tears, that it would not suit me. Should I ever chance to love, it must be a being great in virtue and all those qualities and attributes of character which I so much revere in you and Mr. Bedford, mamma. I could not love a commonplace character, or one who was not my superior. I must lean on what I love; I must venerate it next to heaven."

"Dear child, may the dreams of your noble heart come true!" said Mrs. Willoughby, with emotion. "Love is, indeed, under different circumstances, the bane and antidote of the heart. May yours be happy, Edith! But do you know who this handsome stranger is?"

"I do not. He did not favor me with his name. Who is he, mamma?"

"My nephew, Walter Shirley. He spent several hours with me to-day, and I consider him an elegant and polished gentleman. I hope a longer acquaintance will develop a disposition in perfect harmony with his handsome exterior!"

"Oh, mamma! had I known it was he, I think I should have acted on the Colonel's hint, and rebelled, by returning with him, to show him the way hither. He is very—very handsome—and kind—Oh, I'm very glad we shall meet again!"

"He left Woodreve at five this afternoon, but you will meet with him again, Edith, and often, when we get to town. He regretted, nay deplored, the necessity of returning this evening. But, Edith, ere we go to mix in the crowded haunts of the fashionable world—ere your heart becomes enchanted with its allurements, and your head dizzy with its homage—ere you have found out

and tasted some of the bitter fruits which ripen amidst its glare—I must tell you of some things which have occurred to me—some sad events, which have so sprinkled the lintels of my heart with drops of agony, that joy will never enter it again. I must tell you, Edith—all—all that I have suffered. It may learn you to bear life's trials, at least with a calm appearance of strength. Then, child—when you know all—*never*—*never* refer to the subject again. Come to my chamber at ten, and if I cannot tell you, you shall read the pages of a diary, which no human eye has ever looked into but my own, and which is blurred and blotted with tears," said Mrs. Willoughby, with profound emotion.

With tears starting to her eyes, and her lips trembling with the vain effort they made to say something which might soothe her step-mother's strange mood, she stooped over and kissed her high cold forehead.

"Say nothing now, Edith—I understand all that you would express—leave me a little while alone, dear, and come to me at ten; and Edith, if I pain you, by drawing aside the veil which hides the wounds of my spirit, think only of the unselfish love which could induce my proud nature to ask for a more tender tie through its sorrows," said Mrs. Willoughby.

That night, Walter Shirley sat alone in an elegantly furnished room, in one of the most fashionable hotels in town, smoking a choice Havana cigar, while he penned the following letter to his father, who was in Washington:—

"Dear Sir: Ruin or matrimony stared me in the face this morning, and between the two I was unutterably miserable. Your note, describing your cold reception by the President, and the high favor that sneaking Beverly seems to be in, gave me an idea that you are checkmated there, and added no little to my ill humor. I was looking at my pistol, and thinking what a very comfortable thing it would be to get out of the world, beyond the reach of creditors, duns, writs, and all the other cursed plagues of life, when my servant came in with a julep; of course, I drank it; then thought more favorably of matrimony. I went to Woodreve, and a noble domain it is; but, to triumph! the fates befriended me, notwithstanding all the precautions to the contrary. An event, an accident, or a providence, whichever you may please to call it, introduced me to the beautiful Edith, on my way to my aunt's. I rendered her a small service, which she repaid with the brightest smile I ever saw. I'll tell you more about the adventure when we meet; I can only hope I have made an impression. Indeed, sir, if it were not for those confounded mortgages, and my debts of

honor, I would consent, almost, to receive this glorious creature dowerless. My aunt received me as kindly as such a Juno *can* receive a mortal. She is as cold, as beautiful and polished, as an iceberg. I felt a little awed at first, but acting on your most excellent hint, began to talk of my tour through Europe—of Rome and Tasso—of Florence and Dante, whom I quoted freely in Italian—of Venice and the Medici—of Madame Dacier—of Corinne. It took well. I was eloquent. I praised her cameos, her pictures and statuettes, which *are* really fine. I moralized over the splendid wrecks of the classic ages in Greece. I quoted Childe Harold—and Milton, and the deuce knows who; in short, spent a most fatiguing, laborious day. I did not know I was so fine an actor, and pinched myself twice to ascertain my own identity. There is a splendid place at Woodreve for a bowling-green. I am as happy now as I was miserable this morning; and very well satisfied to become a Benedict. Edith is a magnificent creature, and, when I choose, can amuse me at home, while her fortune will make a free gentleman of me abroad. I raved enough during the day of patriotism, and all such stuff, to convince my handsome aunt that I am a worthy descendant of my grandfather. There was not a word said about business. I fancied she looked vexed when I told her of meeting with Edith—but I am dying for a sherry cobbler, and must conclude.

"Truly yours, W. S."

After Walter Shirley finished scrawling this rambling letter, he took from his mouth his half-consumed cigar, threw himself back in his chair, and, after allowing the volume of smoke to escape slowly upwards in a spiral column from his lips, uttered a loud laugh. He then rang his bell, and when the waiter appeared, ordered a sherry cobbler, and, walking several times to and fro the room, paused before a *cheval* mirror, and deliberately surveyed his handsome person from head to foot, ran his long white fingers through his hair, and, turning on his heel, went to the table, and, while sealing and directing the letter to Col. Shirley's address, laughed again. When the servant entered with the beverage he had ordered, he gave him the letter, and dispatched him with all speed to the post-office with it.

In the same hour, Edith went to her step-mother's chamber. There was no light within it, save what the moon shed through the windows, and far from that, back in the shadow, sat the lady. There was something so solemn and still in the aspect of everything, that Edith felt awed, and when she, prompted by feelings she could not control, kissed her cheek, it was wet with tears.

"Take this, Edith," said Mrs. Willoughby, at last, and placing a small package of papers in her hand. "With all my stern resolve to suffer, I cannot talk of the past. Take it, dear, and read it, and whenever you meet with a face which wears a perpetual calm, and can smile with all, and on all, know that it is a mask which hides some terrible suffering. To-morrow, lay it under my pillow. Do not return it to me; put it there; I will get it. I do not wish to cast a shadow over your dreams of life, Edith, but to teach you that it is woman's destiny to love, to suffer, and endure. Good night, my child."

CHAPTER III.

"I look around, and feel the awe
Of one who walks alone
Among the wrecks of former days,
In mournful ruin strewn."

P. BENJAMIN.

"Thus we're taught in this cold world to smother
The feelings our hearts hold most dear."

Song.

[Mrs. Willoughby's Diary is not a regular one. She has only noted down incidents which exerted a controlling influence over her life. Many pages were blotted and almost effaced with tears, and some written in such a wild scrawling hand as indicated a distracted mind. At one period, nearly three years elapsed without a line being added; but, at a subsequent time, she resumed her pen, and merely related, without comment, the circumstances which had occurred.—ED.]

THE family at Woodreve (thus began the diary), is not large; but what it wants in numbers, is made up in happiness. My father, Mr. Bedford, and myself; Winnie, my nurse; Mrs. Crump, the housekeeper, and a few old servants, are all. Winnie is an important personage on the estate. She was my mother's *femme de chambre*, and was devoted to her service, and attended her faithfully and tenderly through the long period of her failing health. Whenever she travelled, Winnie's care guarded her from every discomfort, and procured for her all the necessary delicacies which her state demanded; and towards the close of her life, watched with the most unwearied love beside her pillow night

and day. The legacy she inherited from her grateful mistress was her freedom and an annuity for life; but she begged permission to remain at Woodreve to take charge of me. Her fidelity had been too well and too long tried for her proposal to be slighted; indeed, it was gratefully acceded to by my father, for I was but a babe. She is a large brown woman, the exact color of a ripe hazel-nut, with rather a solemn and dignified look, except when she laughs at what she considers my wit; then her prolonged chuckle, her asthmatic wheezing, and starting eyes are ludicrously fearful. Her queer name is an abbreviation of Winnifride, and is a favorite cognomen among negroes. She always wears a great turban, made of gay-colored Madras handkerchiefs, and from each ear depends a gold hoop, about a quarter of a yard in circumference. Her neck is generally ornamented with a string of large amber beads, which are her especial glory; and her dresses are of the gayest-colored stuffs, made full and rather short to display her clocked stockings and neat shoes. Dear old faithful Winnie! how beautiful you are in my eyes! Your goodness and fidelity make you so. * * * * * * *

I do not remember my mother. She died when I was two, and my brother Jasper twelve, years old; but Mr. Bedford used to show me a beautiful portrait which hung in my father's room; that, he told me, was hers. I loved it, for it looked down on me with such a soft, tender glance, that I used to wish it would stretch out its thin, snowy hands and take me to its bosom. Then he would very often carry me, about sunset, to a great heap of white marble, under a silent pavilion which stood back almost hidden among the trees, and tell me that my mother slept there; but that her soul, in a more perfect and beautiful likeness than when on earth, lived in heaven, where, if I were good, I would one day find her, and be folded forever to her breast. This was beautiful; but I could not then understand how my mother could be in three places at once—in the portrait, under the marble, and in heaven. Why did ye leave me, mother? Why did ye not tarry and save your child from these pangs?

My father is a silent, and, sometimes I think, a stern man; but his voice was always modulated to a gentler tone, and his brow lost its character of deep thought, whenever he caressed or fondled me. He never spoke to me of my mother; but whenever I alluded to her, the muscles of his face would work, and he generally put me down off his knee and left the room immediately. These two, Mr. Bedford and my father, were the only teachers I had until I was fifteen, and oh! how beautifully near heaven did my childhood pass! I used to think the loving hearts around

me were the angels with whom my inner life used to walk ere it descended from its high estate to animate a form of dust and ashes. I thought Woodreve was like heaven, and the bright-plumaged song-birds, floating in the sunshine, like the spirits of happy children who rejoice in that cloudless spirit-land.

I fancied Mr. Bedford was the genius of the stars, for often on moonlight nights, when he would let me crouch beside him while he made his celestial observations, a glory seemed to shine about his white head, and I, filled with awe, thought he held converse with spirits, and could see through the planets into heaven.

There are daily contests between Mr. Bedford and Winnie. She declares I am moped with studying outlandish languages, and getting pale and sick from such close confinement; and he calls her an "ignorant person, who cannot be expected to understand such matters." Of course, it affronts her highly. She is only jealous; but I can coax her at any time into a good humor by kissing her smooth brown cheek, and calling her *mammy*.

To-day I entered my fifteenth year, and to-day occurred my first trial. My father had provided the services of a resident tutor for me, an Italian gentleman, whom he had known in Naples some years before, when he was wintering there with my mother for her health. Count Uberti was then a person of wealth and high position, and bestowed the kindest attentions on my parents. His beautiful villa on the picturesque shore of the Bay of Naples, his carriage and his gondola, were at their service; and not a day passed that he did not send a present of fruit or flowers from his own garden to the invalid. But a great political change occurred in his government subsequently, and his estates being confiscated, he became an exile, beggared, and almost broken-hearted. My father one day met him accidentally in town, whither he had gone on business, and during the day they spent together, learned the sad story of his wrongs. He offered him, in the most delicate manner, an asylum at Woodreve, reminding him of all the favors himself and my mother had formerly received from him, and besought him to accept of his hospitality as a debt of gratitude that was justly due him.

"Ah, my friend, not as I am. I am too poor—too proud to become your guest," he replied. "Here I teach a few gentlemen my own sweet language, and I have a musical class, which affords me an adequate income for my few wants."

"Uberti," said my father, grasping his hands, "can I overrule your objections by telling you I have a young daughter who would profit much by your instructions in these two branches?

Come to Woodreve. There are some views there which will remind you of *bella Italia*. Your occupation is honorable; but your feelings are too high-toned and sensitive to be exposed to the chances of a rough world. At Woodreve, my friend, you can have your easel and palette set up anywhere. You will have quiet, while nature will smile around you through beautiful creations; and, best of all, Uberti, you'll have *friends* by your side."

"I will come, my friend," he replied, with a burst of tears, for these were the first kind words he had heard for many a weary day; "I will come."

At first, I bore the confinement which these additional studies imposed on me with patient silence. I loved music, I was passionately fond of it, but could not bear the drudgery of learning it systematically; the study of Italian was rendered comparatively easy, from the fact of my being perfectly familiar with Latin; and then there was a something in my teacher's soft large eyes and musical voice which exerted a fascinating influence over me, and a flitting expression of such unutterable sadness in his countenance at times, which curbed every feeling of impatience and petulance, for fear of wounding him, that I could only sigh and go on with my tasks. But on this sad day, while I was preparing with no willing mind to take my music lesson, one of the harp strings broke, and while Signor Uberti repaired it, I gazed out of the window, while the fresh sweet winds kissed my cheeks, and longed to be as free as the birds flying in the sunshine. The old trees beckoned me to the woods, and the very flowers nodded their heads for me to come. Through the shrubbery at the foot of the lawn the river gleamed restlessly, and seemed to laugh mockingly at my restraints. I determined to be free.

"I will not practise this morning, Signor."

"It is the Signor Shirley's orders. Two hours, *caro mio*. The harp is ready!"

"Play yourself, Signor. I am longing for fresh air, and go into it I will!"

Without replying to my rude speech, he brought the harp and placed it beside me. I grasped the strings and broke them with a crash, and snatching the music-book from his hand, tossed it as far out on the lawn as I could. I turned to him with a look of triumph, and saw the warm blood gleaming like fire through the olive of his complexion, but, laughing with derision, I paused not, and leaped through the window, and ran like a lapwing to the forest! But oh, how grimly smiled everything on this my first transgression! how embittered were my joys! what a thick murky veil hung between my vision and the loving face of nature! Every-

thing obeyed the law of its being but me—the outcast! Where were the birds? The forest seemed silent, and my favorite wild flowers looked pale and withered. Then I sat down beside the fountain, but from its clear crystalline waters a hideous toad stared at me with its great green eyes. I fled to a more secluded spot, and threw myself on the mossy earth and sobbed. I thought of my father's displeasure, and trembled; I thought of Mr. Bedford's grief, and wept bitterly; but when I thought of the unprovoked insult I had offered a noble and excellent stranger, who, under delicate and painful circumstances, had been driven to accept a shelter beneath our roof, I was humbled to the dust; I would have gone back and knelt to him for forgiveness, but I dared not. I should have been almost frenzied had I known, as I did afterwards, that my father was approaching the music-room at the moment, and through the open door saw all that had occurred. He placed his arm around Signor Uberti's neck, and besought his pardon for the waywardness of his spoiled child, which was readily and freely granted. But there, alone in the forest, I spent the livelong day. No message came for me to return. Winnie was commanded, under pain of my father's severe displeasure, not to seek me, nor was she allowed to send. When the sun was calmly setting, filling the whole earth with the silent rapture of his glory; when the birds returned, uttering low, sweet sounds in their musical throats, as they fluttered down in their nests; exhausted with hunger and grief, I crept away to my mother's tomb, and seated myself on the broad marble step which surrounded it, where I fell asleep. There Mr. Bedford found me, and when I awoke, my head was pillowed on his breast.

"Do, do forgive me!" I cried, clasping his neck.

"My poor Miriam! I knew you would be sorry for your fault. You did very wrong, my child; but you have suffered, and expiated your error by repentance. Come to your father," he replied.

"Yes," I exclaimed, rising, "I will go. I have committed a great offence, Mr. Bedford, and I deserve the greatest severity. I will ask their forgiveness; I will humble myself; I will let them see my tears; come with me." * * * * * An affecting scene occurred. I am forgiven in heaven, I hope, as on earth; Signor Uberti and I are friends. My father is more social, and I more subdued; while Mr. Bedford moves about like the calm angel of the house, ministering to the hearts of all. Winnie abuses the whole clique in unmeasured terms, and swears they are killing me; but I kissed her, and asked her if "she wanted me to be a termagant, who would some day pinch her?" She began to chuckle, and had not finished when I went to sleep. * * * * * To-day

Mr. Bedford strolled out with me to my favorite haunt, beside the forest fountain, and while we sat there, he gave me a sketch, a mere sketch, of my father's history: He is an Englishman by birth, of poor but respectable parentage, and for many years supported himself and his only relative, a dear sister, after whom you are called, by his literary efforts. But in the great busy world of London, where there are always so many clamoring candidates for fame, his productions created no extraordinary sensation, until he published a fiery pamphlet, glowing with enthusiastic eloquence, and replete with sound logical arguments, in favor of the freedom of the North American Colonies, then in a state of rebellion against the government of England. Everybody read it; it ran through five editions in two days; and the author was sought out by the leading noble politicians of the day—one party to bribe him to silence, the other to secure his pen for their own service. Among these the Earl of Nesselrode, a nobleman distinguished for a thousand estimable qualities, as well as for a powerful intellect and refined taste, became his especial friend. But while the intellectual and *spirituel* of these two fine natures harmonized so admirably together, there was, innate in the earl's disposition, an overweening and arrogant pride of birth, which in reality placed a great gulf between them. He dated his descent at a period before the Norman conquest, and could boast of a long line of virtuous and distinguished ancestry; and had any one who could not, with the most superior advantages, have shown a genealogical tree of the same antiquity, presented himself to the proud earl, as his daughter's suitor, he would have treated his pretensions to her hand with contempt. He was my uncle, Miriam, and it had been his wish from our childhood that his daughter and I should marry, for I, in default of other heirs, was the next in succession to the title and estates. Lady Caroline de Bourg was a lovely womanly creature, with all the sweetest attributes of human nature to add a lustre to her character. I loved her, child; I will not tell you how long, how silently, how fondly I loved that gentle creature! I knew not myself the depth, the strength, the purity of my affection, until it was subjected to the fiery ordeal of knowing that she loved another; that she had given the devotion of her life to Jasper Shirley, her proud father's secretary—the penniless, obscurely descended, but highly gifted author—who, in scaling the eagle's lofty nest, "had found a trembling dove within," which flew to his heart and nestled there. The earl's wrath was awful when he discovered, through an old domestic, their secret; I will not tell you of it, or of the bitter, taunting words, with which he drove Shirley forth from the old ancestral portals of Nesselrode

castle. He sent Caroline to the north of Scotland, to his sister, a stiff, puritanical woman, who thought it a sin to smile, and a crime to love, with whom she was to remain until our marriage, which my uncle declared should take place within four months. The earl's conduct towards Lady Caroline raised a spirit in her as haughty as his own; and when she received this mandate, she wrote to me, "appealing to my honor, and our old childish love, not to wed her. She loved me as a brother, nothing more; but in any other relation should hate me as the destroyer of her peace, if she was forced into a union with me." She bade me "beware of inflicting a lifetime of misery on her, of embittering every hour of her existence, and driving her into temptation; for she loved Jasper Shirley, and would remain faithful to that love, no matter what they drove her to." Poor young heart! I would not have caused it one throb of pain for worlds; my affection for her was of that pure and exalted kind which, hopeless itself, lends all its energies to the happiness of its object. I sent her a soothing reply, and requested her to write to me at Rome, whither I was going immediately; and, without informing the earl of my intentions, left Nesselrode castle at dawn, and embarked the same evening for Calais. I remained abroad three years, and although the earl was seriously displeased with me, he encouraged our constant correspondence. Meanwhile, the American patriots, a phalanx of men whose constancy, whose bravery and fortitude, would have honored the proudest days of Sparta, were slowly but surely progressing towards the goal of their country's freedom; and foremost among them, at the right hand of Washington, with his sword in hand, and his pen when his sword was resting, was your father, Miriam, Jasper Shirley. The private wrongs which had stung him, and made him fly like a hunted lion from England, gave a certain impetus to his ardor, for they were a part of the evil system, and the result of principles, which he abhorred, and against which he now battled. One by one fell the chains of foreign oppression until the final blow was given, and a nation, regenerated and free, lifted up its thousand hands exultingly to heaven. On the proudest page of the annals of the republic, the name of the patriot Shirley stands conspicuous. Patriot and statesman, still in the meridian of life, he was one of the leading spirits of the land, one of the hardiest and most persevering pioneers of a system of self-government which has filled the decaying thrones of Europe with trembling and astonishment. The fame of his eloquence went abroad; his pleadings for liberty turned pale the cheek of oppression; he contended for the rights of man, believing that, where "freedom is not, there no virtue is." What cared he, this noble-

man of nature, for titled honors, and inherited dignities? What cared he, this builder up of a nation, and architect of his own high fortune, for the delusive glory, the arrogance, the pride of infirm dynasties? He was a MAN, in the loftiest sense of the word, and of him it might be said, as of Gherardo da Camino, of Trevisi: "Let us suppose that Gherardo da Camino had been the grandson of the meanest hind that ever drank of the Sile of the Cagnano, and that his grandfather was not yet forgotten, who will dare say that Gherardo da Camino was a mean man, or will not agree in calling him noble?"

In England, Shirley was known as an audacious but gifted rebel, and it was through the teeming reports of the press that Caroline heard most frequently of him. She exulted in silence in his triumphs and in her choice, and nothing made her father more furious than to see her eyes and her cheeks kindling when some noble but indiscreet guest, among the exciting topics of the day, would mention his interdicted name.

As soon as I arrived in Rome, I had written to Shirley, telling him all that had transpired after he left England, only reserving the secret of my love for Caroline, and offered him my friendship, in suitable terms; and although it caused me a pang, told him I would hereafter be the medium of a correspondence between them. With what gratitude this opportunity was accepted you may well imagine; and in thus securing to Caroline a source of happiness, I felt almost rewarded for my own disappointment. Thus, they corresponded constantly during the three years I was at Rome.

One day I received a letter from Caroline, beseeching me to meet her without delay at Havre. Astonished and alarmed, I posted off the same day. When I arrived, she told me that "her father, highly offended at my long absence, had given up all hopes of ever seeing us united, and forced on her the attentions of a superannuated duke, whom she was commanded to regard as her future husband. She determined, when she found there was no alternative, to fly from Nesselrode castle, and, under my protection, go to America, where Shirley had been pleading with her to come for a year past, using every argument his eloquent affection could suggest to prevail on her to do so. She had already written to him to expect her in every packet that arrived at Boston from France." She besought me, in the most impassioned language, to go with her. It was another tearing open old and sore wounds; but I obeyed her wishes, and led her to him. They met, and I witnessed their rapture—at the altar I heard them exchange their vows; they were happy; and I, knowing she was another's, profaned not the present by thoughts of the past, and thanked Heaven that neither of them guessed my secret.

The earl, your grandfather, Miriam, died a few years after; and as Shirley would never consent that his son should be acknowledged as the heir of so haughty an aristocrat, and I had, more from choice than circumstances, become a naturalized citizen of the republic, the title and entailed portions of the fine domains reverted to the crown. This mansion and these grounds it was your father's pride to build and adorn, that she who had voluntarily relinquished titles, luxury, and the prejudices of high birth for him, might lose nothing by the exchange. Never saw I such devotion. Her every movement was fondly watched; the winds of heaven were not allowed to visit too roughly her delicate form; and if tears ever overflowed her soft, dovelike eyes, he kissed them away. "But," said Mr. Bedford, in a choked voice, as a tide of recollections rushed over his mind—"*she died*. You were a mere babe, child, and your brother Jasper had just been sent to St. Omer's college in France, to receive his education, when we laid her pale, lovely form in the dust. The darkened and silent mansion looked like a great vault, and we, your father and I, were its restless ghosts——" Here Mr. Bedford broke off abruptly, and walked hastily away.

And such was my father. As I live, I felt prouder of him than of the old line which commenced before the Norman conquest! And yet a certain satisfaction pervades my heart when I think of my mother's high descent. It is but a trait of that human weakness which forever clogs the noblest emotions of our souls; but if Dante in Paradise felt it, why might not I? Hear what he says on meeting his ancestor Cacciaguida:—

> "Oh slight respect of man's nobility!
> I never shall account it marvellous
> That our infirm affections, here below,
> Thou movest to boasting, when I could not choose,
> E'en in that region of unwarped desire,
> In heaven itself, to make my vaunt in thee."

And so Mr. Bedford loved my mother. Oh, rare faith and constancy of woman! Oh, rarer disinterestedness and genuine truth in man! How godlike is endurance! How divine is patience! Every heart, like every rose, has its own thorns. When, I wonder, will mine spring forth from the stem of life!

* * * * * *

For two weeks, Woodreve has been a scene of festive gayety. My brother Jasper, who has never lived much with us, and who married, six months ago, a young Southern heiress, made us a visit with his bride. She is a *petite*, gazelle-eyed creature, with such di-

minutive and symmetrically-formed hands and feet as I never saw, and walks with an Andalusian air which is superb. She is full of harmony and grace, and we are all pleased at the match, Winnie included. They are on their way to Saratoga, to spend the season. * * * I am glad the bustling gayety is over. Somehow it does not suit me. My spirit has existed in such freedom, in this my beautiful seclusion, that it will be utterly impossible ever to fetter it down with the hypercritical distinctions and the formal conventionalities of life, as it is in the world of fashion. I weary at the bare idea of it. * * * This day, Signor Uberti, who has been our honored guest three happy years, received glad tidings from Naples. His title and estates have been, by another turn of fortune, restored to him. We all sincerely congratulate him, but are much pained at the idea of losing him from our little circle. * * * This morning I enter my eighteenth year. They tell me I am beautiful. I believe I am; but, on my honor, I regard this rare perfection of face and feature as I would a fine piece of sculpture, giving all the glory and honor to the mighty Artist Hand which created it. The same powerful wisdom which formed yon lovely flower fashioned me. How dare I, then, arrogate to myself the glory? I am none of mine—I am His. Religion must be beautiful. Why have I never been guided to the celestial light?—*Night, 11 o'clock.* This evening, at sunset, I walked to the river shore alone, and saw a golden lotus-flower rocking gently on the little billows, every one of which was tinted with a light and radiant hue. I tried to get at it, but it was too far out. I should have fallen from the rock into the river, had I stooped far enough to touch it. Soon after, as I walked homewards, a noble-looking young stranger, in a green hunting-dress, with his rifle slung over his shoulder, met me, and, presenting the coveted flower, bowed courteously, and passed on. He was very handsome, with a fine aquiline nose, waving hair of a light, glossy brown, and eyes of the deepest shade of blue, fringed with long, black eyelashes. Who can he be? I hope I may see him again. * * * Last night I dreamed of the stranger. I wish I had not. After breakfast, I took *Orlando Furioso* off the library table, and walked out to my usual haunt in the forest. I love the Italian poets, particularly Ariosto and Dante. Whether it is that Signor Uberti directed my tastes that way, or that their spirituality and faith, bathed in all the liquid beauty of their classic land, and flowing through the medium of their heavenly language, influences me, I cannot tell. The latter, I expect. I was reading; the crack of a rifle startled me, and, lo! a blue-bird fell

gasping from the tree on my bosom, spattering my neck with blood.

"Sir," I exclaimed, as the stranger's form emerged from the shrubbery, "how dare you murder so innocent a thing as this? I will get in: it is dangerous to walk on one's own estate, where guns are fired at random."

"Pardon me, Miss Shirley; it was an accidental discharge, I assure you. The trigger of my rifle caught in a small branch as it rested on my shoulder, and went off, though I *do* plead guilty to shooting birds sometimes," he said, in a courteous tone, and baring his head. I never saw so noble a countenance.

"The birds, sir, at Woodreve, are under my protection," I said.

"They are, then, henceforth, sacred to me. But this has been an unlucky accident to me as well as the bird, lady—see, my fingers are nearly torn off. If your protection is a sinecure against such evil accidents, pray honor me with it," he said, smiling.

"Oh, sir, you almost deserve it," I cried, unfastening my rose-colored breast-knot from my dress. "Let me wind this about your fingers to stanch the bleeding; then go, I pray you."

As I wrapped the ribbon around the wound, which was bleeding profusely, he was, or pretended to feel, faint, and was obliged to sit down, while I had to kneel beside him to adjust it properly. The dead bird fell on the soft moss beside me. How, *how* I hated him for depriving it of life!

"Thank you, lady," he said, with a provoking smile; "I will not poach again at Woodreve for birds!"

"For what, then, will you poach, sir? The game is never molested in Woodreve forest."

"For a *hart;* I believe there are deers in this fine park?"

"None!" cried I, angrily; "and were there any, they should never be hunted by a mere stranger."

"Lady—Miss Shirley, I have offended you unwittingly, and beg pardon again for my misfortune; but as we may cross each other's path hereafter, I wish to retain no memory of your anger; but to recollect only, with profound gratitude, your goodness in binding together so skilfully my shattered fingers. And for fear another twig may mischievously fire off my rifle for me *nolens volens*, I will throw it in the river, and take my pencils and tablets for my companions in this region of beauty," he said.

"You are very familiar with my name, sir. Are you of our neighborhood?" I asked, impelled by a curiosity I could not control.

"You shall know mine in return. It is Arthur Vernon. This is a fair exchange. I am a lover of adventure, and a wanderer in

search of it, lady. I am not of your neighborhood, but of a far country over the sea, where my name is not the meanest in the land. I was attracted by the beauty of this scenery, and set up my tent at a neighboring farm-house, where I help the good dame to feed her chickens, and watch her milking the cows, when I have nothing else to do, whereupon she rewards me with a frothing syllabub of warm milk, or a new egg for my breakfast," he said, with an assumed air of gravity.

"I congratulate you on your manly pursuits," I said, diverted at his manner, and left him. I suppose he is an artist. He is very audacious, whoever he may be. * * * We have no neighbors within ten miles. My life is like a calm mountain lake, which is never rippled except by the falling of a pebble or a heavy blossom in its smooth waters. The routine of every day is almost the same. I kiss my father and dear Mr. Bedford, in the morning—preside at the breakfast-table—make tea—chat—read a little—play on my harp and sing—ride or walk out—train my flowers, and visit the negro cottages to look after the welfare of their inmates. But I am growing listless, and weary of my light tasks. My heart goes groping out, in spite of me, into an unknown region, in search of an idea, a vision, or hope, which will satisfy its mysterious longings—which will blend with its affections and sympathies in soft harmony—which will sustain its weakness, and succor it with something of a mother's tenderness. Then comes a pair of large violet eyes, peering through these mists of my mind into my heart. I know them, but fly from them, because they exert a strange influence over me; but still, like a young bird essaying to fly, my heart stretches its pinions, and flutters strongly to go beyond its nest—to soar away and sing among distant blossoms. I fear I am growing tired of Woodreve. I no longer delight in hearing Mr. Bedford tell the disastrous tales of "Troy, of Tesole and Rome." Helen no longer charms me. I feel a contempt for Paris; and Cornelia, my *beau idéal* of every virtue, makes me stupid. I used to love to read of the spirited Hortensia, bearding the proud old Romans in their Forum, and demanding justice for her sex; and Semiramis, with her gorgeous army, subduing nations, always kindled a glow on my cheeks and a fire in my eyes; but I care not to think of any of these. I wish that old astrologer of Forli, Guido Bonatti, were living, that he might cast my horoscope. I don't know why Mr. Bedford cannot do it. He knows well this art of the Chaldeans; but he says it is diabolical, and I must believe him. My father is engaged on some historical work; I don't know what, but I scarcely ever see him. In the midst of all this, my old nurse is my especial tor-

ment. She wants me to take the most nauseous doses that were ever concocted by a witch by moonlight, and insists on my bathing daily in rose-water, which she considers a sovereign remedy for the megrims; then she rubs and pounds my feet in her fat hands until they ache, to bring the disease out, she says, and finally allows me to stroll out. From sundry groans and exclamations, I am sure she thinks that some *Obi* fiend has put a spell on me. I laugh at her when I can. * * * There was a large dinner-party yesterday, and I was introduced to the *élite* of town and country; as the mistress of Woodreve, I received many compliments, and acquitted myself, as lady of the mansion, in such a manner as afterwards called forth the approval of my father and Mr. Bedford. Among the guests was a Mr. Willoughby, a young gentleman of wealth and excellent position, who has been some two years a widower. My father has always expressed the highest admiration of his character. He was very particular in his attentions to me, but is of that stolid, practical cast of mind, which, with the best intentions, does not know how to descend to the agreeabilities of life. He talked of his lands, his improvements, his new equipage, and politics, and I was on the verge of a yawn, when, happily for my credit, he changed the uninteresting subject to his little daughter, and, with much affectionate pride, showed me her miniature. She is a perfect cherub, and my eloquent admiration filled him with gratitude, and me—with confusion. I hope he is not vain enough to construe my admiration of his child as a compliment to himself. * * *

CHAPTER IV.

"Let not the people be too swift to judge,
As one who reckoneth on the blades in field,
Or e'er the crop be ripe—"

DANTE.

I HAVE not (continues the diary) been to the forest for two whole days, for fear of meeting the audacious being who haunts it—*and my memory*. But this evening the sunset dyed the heavens with such marvellous tints of beauty, and showered over the earth and its shadows such gemlike mists, that every tree and blossom, every wave and rock, were crowned with a

golden lustre, and I wended my way, lost in thought, to the fountain of Hecuba, for so I have named my favorite haunt, from the following circumstance: A few days ago, Mr. Bedford and myself walked thither, early after breakfast, to lounge away the morning, as we very often do. As we sat in the shade, he fell into his usual train of conversation on classical subjects, and began to tell me the mournful story of Hecuba, of her grief at the loss of Polyxena, and the ravings of her frantic despair at the death of Polydorus. My eyes filled, and the tears would have fallen; but the sound of light footsteps bounding over the dead leaves startled me, for well knew I whose they were. I turned my head quickly round, but only in time to see this Vernon pause an instant, bow haughtily, and pass on. "Away with Hecuba," thought I, as I drew myself proudly up, and looked full in his eyes—"away with fables. Why comes this being so often across my path, luring my heart after him?" I observed that he had no gun, and still wore his arm in a sling. But Mr. Bedford was so full of the woful narrative that he saw and heard nothing, but kept on to the end; while I leaned back, and a feeling of such unutterable sadness crept over me, so dense, so oppressive, that I could neither weep nor move. * * * Brightly gleamed the playful waters in the evening light, as if some prodigal hand had thrown a thousand diamonds amidst the spray, and softly and sweetly echoed the vesper hymns of the birds, murmuring, and rising and falling, as the daybeam faded like moonlit billows on a flowery shore. With my cheek leaning on my hand, I unconsciously began to sing, in a low tone, snatches of a sad song. I tried to warm my own heart by chanting—

"Love not, love not, ye hapless sons of clay;
Hope's fairest wreaths are made of fading flowers;
The brightest, sweetest, droop and fall away
Ere they have blossomed for a few short hours.
Love not, love not, oh, love not!"

"A warning vainly given," exclaimed a soft voice near me. I looked, and there, as sure as I live, he stood, leaning, with folded arms, against a tree. "They are the words, lady, of one who loved unworthily, and suffered. Trust them not."

"On what authority am I so often intruded on, Mr. Vernon, by one who is quite a stranger to me?" I said, rising, while my face crimsoned.

"Gratitude, Miss Shirley. Did I not tell you I wished to forget everything but your charity towards my maimed fingers? Mayhap I have been rude in my humor; if so, blame a blithe-

some but true heart, which, like yon fountain, babbles of its own brightness. But I will soon offend you no more by my presence; in a few days I shall leave these scenes of peace for the rugged mountains and wild savannahs of the West," he said, in a subdued tone.

"We are but passing strangers, sir. You need not have been at such pains to thank me formally for performing an act which I should long ago have forgotten, had you not so often referred to it. I wish you well, Mr. Vernon," I replied, as I was going.

"One moment, lady, one moment. I will pass away, and your haughty spirit will remember me only as an unwelcome cloud which crossed your way too often; but I never can, and never wish to forget you. For days and weeks have I watched you, unseen, from some covert shade, moving through these picturesque shades, or reclining, with your book, on the moss beside these fountains, until I have fancied you were some lovely creation of my fancy which a breath might dispel," he said, coming nearer to me.

"Hold, sir!" I exclaimed; "this is not proper. I will hereafter remain in-doors. Nay, I am not offended; but — but, Vernon, you are ungenerous."

"Will you return to-morrow?" he asked, timidly.

"No; I will not come hither. I will become a prisoner under my own roof until I am well assured you have left the country," I said, in an agony of feeling.

"Then, by Heaven! I will seek you there," he exclaimed. "This, my first, my pure, my exalted love, shall not be thus baffled. Go where you will, there will I seek and find you. Over the distant sea, Miss Shirley, I have a name and a home as proud as your own, and as your equal will I woo you."

"Such violence, Mr. Vernon, is befitting your 'pure,' your 'exalted love,'" I exclaimed, angrily. "Had you declared yourself a poor artist, as I thought you were, I could have borne this better; but to come forcing your claim with boasts of your accidental advantages of a 'proud name' and a 'proud home!' Shame on you, sir!"

"Miss Shirley, pardon me—pity me—you are a part of my life, and unless it is restored to me, I must die; a part of my existence which was lost, and which I have found, and for which my palpitating heart opens her veins to take in. Leave me not to despair—spurn me not; scorn not affections such as never ripened in the human soul before."

I could not stand. I leaned for support against the marble rim of the fountain, and big tears rolled over my face, and fell dripping into the water. Its spray fell over me and chilled my

life. I was cold and trembled, and was almost senseless, when thoughts responsive to these wild words filled my heart. He stood by my side, and gently took my unresisting hands in his, and folded them to his lips, and drew me away from the chilling spray of the fountain. "I love you, Miriam," he murmured; "fear not to let your heart seek mine—to mingle with it, to find there its abiding home—fear not; I am not unworthy of such a trust, and will never—never betray it!"

"And who are you?" I almost shrieked, as I started away from him: "who are you, who come and tear by violence one's heart from her bosom."

"Calm thee, beloved twin sister of my being, calm thee!" he said, again gathering my cold hands together in his, and pressing them to his heart—"my love will never harm thee. It shall be thy palladium through life. And if I have torn thy heart from thy bosom, dost not thou feel therein the soft throbbing of another, which tells thee ever, how wildly—how fondly thou art loved? And oh, Miriam, the rapture of the frightened flutterings of thine within my breast—how it trembles—how it warms my soul—how it nestles close to my side. There—rest thy pale cheek on my shoulder, and let me fold thee, wrap thee to my heart."

"Vernon," I said in a low, trembling tone, as I moved away from his side, "stranger as you are, you have smote the rock, and the fountain of affection is unsealed; forth let it flow, obeying the mysterious affinities of nature, and if it may be so, enriching your heart. But we meet not again. You harrow my feelings too deeply. Love should be calm, patient, and holy; not like a mad mountain torrent after a storm!"

"Say not so, Miriam, that we meet not again! come to-morrow, will you not, and let us talk of our future?" he said, pleadingly.

"Selfish being!" exclaimed I, "you care not for my peace or repose! Why to-morrow? Will it not be still to-morrow, and to-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow and forever," he replied. "Here, then, will I seek you to-morrow; but go now, beloved; the dews ascend like a cloud around us—your beautiful hair is heavy with moisture! Return home; and, in your slumbers, forget me not. Here watch I until dawn, dreaming bright, prophetic dreams of the future!"

12 *o'clock; night.* Am I the same Miriam? has not an age passed over me since the morning, or have I by some sudden transition passed into a strange world? Where is the calm, where the harmony, of my being? What shineth down into the quivering waters of the mountain lake—what means this wild, bright, pervading rapture, which like from a Lethean bath I have emerged?

The past is forgotten, and the dim vista of the future is lit by one glowing star, borne in the hands of the impetuous being who has so strangely changed the current of my life. Oh, my father! would that I might seek thee, and tell thee all! Oh, mother! why is the breast, on which I ought now to weep, cold and silent? I cannot sleep. * * * Towards dawn I fell asleep, and when I awoke, discovered a cluster of wild flowers on my pillow. Winnie informed me that she found them at sunrise on my music-stand, which had been left all night on the piazza. There was a strip of paper twisted around them, with Vernon's name, written in pencil on it. I pressed them to my lips, but a small sharp thorn pierced me, and a drop of blood stained the flowers. * * *

My cheeks crimsoned this morning when I kissed my father and Mr. Bedford, and my hands shook so that I could not pour out their tea. Mr. Bedford thought me ill, and proposed a physician, but I objected so decidedly that it was given up. Oh, how I longed to unburden my heart of its heavy secret! They both went to town this afternoon, and I have once more seen Vernon. He seemed to be in a reckless, joyous mood, and laughed at my sadness; and when I told him that I would see him no more, clandestinely, to my infinite surprise, he consented. "These stolen interviews, dear Miriam, are sweet," he said; "but there will be no necessity for them hereafter. I would not woo you after a conventional manner, because my impetuous spirit cannot brook formalities. I wished to be loved for myself alone. I wished to win your heart, without any of that influence which the prestige of rank and wealth surrounds one with."

"And yet you threatened me with them!" said I, smiling.

"And what cared you for them, proud one? You told me you would rather I had been a poor artist. I am an artist, Miriam, but not a poor one, unfortunately for your romance. See how I have been employing myself when I was not helping my good dame at home about her domestic affairs!" he said, placing two small, curiously wrought gold medallions in my hand. He touched the spring which kept them closed, and they flew open, revealing in one an exquisitely painted miniature of myself, and his own in the other. There was a fine Indian chain of gold attached to each of them. He threw the one from which his miniature depended around my neck, and besought me to bestow the other as a free gift in like manner on him. I do not know what ominous feeling it was that induced me to agree to do so only on the condition that he would paint an exact copy of it for myself. I believe I had an idea of giving it, at some future time, to my father or Mr. Bedford for a birthday gift. However, he

consented to comply with my strange wish, and told me he possessed another medallion and chain, precisely similar to these, all three of which had contained antique family miniatures, which he had removed for the purpose of fitting in those he had painted, and into which he would set it. "And now, beloved, I have no reason to shrink from your father's notice; there is no reason why I should not propose for your hand. I have letters of the highest character, from some of the first gentlemen in England, which will fully indorse my statements respecting my birth and fortune. I have heard your father is an Englishman by birth, and the tie of native land will be a great argument in my favor. To-morrow I will seek an interview with him; I will tell him I have seen you accidentally in the forest; and how, to look again and again on the beautiful vision, I loitered until I loved; and then I will ask, in language which he can but listen to, his consent to lay my honors, my fortune, and heart at his daughter's feet." And thus he ran on, drawing such sanguine visions of hope and future bliss, that I mentally chided myself for doubting that they would ever be realized. *I knew my father's bitter prejudices and stern will,* but clouded not his momentary joys by revealing aught of them; I wished, from my inmost heart, to believe the beautiful illusion, and cared not to dispel his. * * * * * Two long dismal days have passed away in incessant rain, and Vernon has not sought my father. What means it? If I doubt him one moment, I draw his miniature from my bosom, and look into the frank, joyous face whose every lineament is truthful, when my confidence is immediately restored. Perhaps he is ill, or has met with some dreadful accident! Twice I thought I saw him moving through the shrubbery that skirts the forest, but it was too far and too gloomy to see distinctly. * * * * *

Morning; sunrise.—The opening day is glorious. Forth beams the sun from his pavilion of purple and gold, and the young day blushes like a coy maiden at the approach of her lover. Bright dew-drops glitter on every spray, like human hopes when fairest, clinging to the tendrils of the heart. Joyously hymn the birds their *jubilate* among the shining boughs, and the soft south wind trembles among the roses to kiss away their leaves. Like the sun-bathed mists around yon mountains, the gloom that has brooded over me during these long dark hours is rolling afar from my bosom, tinted with such hopeful radiance that my soul brightens in it. Winnie has just handed me a note from Vernon. He will see my father to-day, and has been kept home by severe indisposition. I knew it. How full of fondness and devotion are the breathing lines! A servant from the farm, Winnie says,

brought it. I laughed and sung, and the poor old *maummy* had two severe paroxysms of chuckling, which expressed, more emphatically than words could do, her delight at my returning spirits. * * * * *

——Oh, day begun in joy, how have ye ended?

"I have seen
The thorn frown rudely all the winter long,
And after bear the rose upon its top;
And bark, that all the way across the sea
Ran straight and speedy, perish at the last, e'en
In the haven's mouth!"

DANTE.

To-day my father sent for me to the drawing-room, where, on account of the light, he has been writing for some days past. I knew not what to dread, and went with slow and reluctant steps to the interview. But he received me in so gracious a manner that all my fears about Vernon, and an incidental discovery of our interviews, instantly vanished. With some formality, and a highly pleased expression of countenance, he informed me that "Mr. Willoughby had, in the most honorable and generous terms, proposed for my hand, and hoped sincerely I would consider his suit favorably, as he was a most eligible match, and a gentleman he decidedly approved of, and wished for a son-in-law." I was silent; my hands covered my face; and when he requested me to answer him, I burst into tears, and exclaimed: "I could never become the wife of Mr. Willoughby." "It is my wish, Miriam," he replied, sternly; "leave me now, and consider the matter more favorably; I am growing old—I cannot live long, child, and there is no one, under whose care and protection I could leave you, in whose honor, affection, and indulgence I have such confidence as in Mark Willoughby." I saw, about an hour afterwards, Vernon approaching the house, and I wrapped a scarf about me, and fled far down into the forest, where not a sound but the rustling of leaves, and the beating of my own heart, disturbed me. I felt stupefied, and knew not how the time passed; I remember nothing but one or two wild intervals of distracted thought, until I heard a voice echoing through the silence, "Miriam—Miriam!" It was Vernon's, and when he saw the gleaming of my white dress through the trees, and bounded over a fallen tree to reach my side, his face was very white, and an angry scowl darkened his fine brow. He grasped my hands together in his, and gazed on me until the lines of his face softened, and the blood returned to his marble cheeks. He sat down by my side, and drew me to his bosom, exclaiming—

"Mine you are, Miriam, in despite of them; nor shall any earthly

power separate us. Two old renegades—to refuse me, forsooth, because I am a noble born English gentleman! What cares love like ours for monarchies or republics? I defy them both—your father, and that old Bedford, who is quite as bad."

"Vernon, forget not who I am, in your wrath against these two. How—tell me how they received you—what said they?" I asked.

"Your father, my Miriam, is a proud, stern old man, who would sacrifice your happiness to a mere prejudice. But, if it pains you, I will not even say that again. They received me with great courtesy; and when I produced my letters, they were read, and I was assured that it was an unnecessary formality to present them; that my own word and appearance would have been sufficient to insure me a hospitable reception. Mr. Bedford knew my family in Devonshire, and said he would have recognized me almost by my resemblance to my mother. Then I gradually opened the object of my visit to them. I acknowledged frankly, Miriam, that obeying more the impulse of my own impetuous nature than the proprieties of formal etiquette, I had, unexpectedly to yourself, met you time after time in the forest, and at last declared my love. Your father's face grew dark, but I urged my suit with all the ardor of a sanguine heart, which thinks no evil; I told him, if he would consent to our marriage, I would return to England immediately, and make the most satisfactory arrangements for it, and that we would spend each alternate year with him.

"'You seem to be well assured of Miss Shirley's consent, at least,' he said, in a severe tone.

"'Miss Shirley, sir, as a dutiful daughter, referred me to you—nor would she or I have condescended to any other than a frank and honorable course in this matter,' I said, flushing up.

"'You take a high tone, Mr. Vernon; but know, sir, that, however advantageous your position as an English gentleman of rank may be, or however honorable your alliance with my family might be, I must decline your offer in the most decided manner. The most insuperable objections exist to it,' said Mr. Shirley, rising.

"'May I ask what those objections may be, Mr. Shirley? My pride of character, and my dignity, demand an explanation,' exclaimed I, also rising.

"'You are my guest, sir, and it ought to be sufficient for you to *know* that I decline your alliance, without forcing an explanation from me which would be a breach of hospitality. But one of the reasons I *can*, and will voluntarily, inform you of. My daughter, Miss Shirley, is destined to become the wife of a gentleman I most highly approve and to whom my honor is almost pledged to secure

her union with him. This gentleman is an American, and a republican, and she shall marry none other," he said, deliberately.

"'Sir,' I exclaimed, through my set teeth, for I was fully roused, 'this one reason is very cogent—waive all the laws of hospitality, and oblige me by stating the other; I will take the responsibility of the act on myself.'

"'As you please, Mr. Vernon,' he answered, bitterly; 'your being an English aristocrat would place an insurmountable barrier between my daughter and yourself. I detest the whole brood.'

"'Good God, sir! I thought you were an Englishman by birth, and little expected that my suit would be scorned because, in one of the old historic homes of England, I first drew my breath,' I said, in amaze.

"'Your supposition was right, sir; I am an Englishman by birth, and would that I might wipe away the foul stain from my life! The past warns me, and my daughter weds you not,' he replied, sternly.

"'Mr. Shirley, you will not force your daughter into a marriage which is distasteful to her?' I asked, gulping down my rage.

"'Sir!' he cried, waving his hand towards the door, 'I will manage my family without the unwelcome and impertinent interference of strangers. If you love my daughter, I warn you see her no more; seek no more interviews with her; or not the deep affection I feel for her, as the child of my dead wife, can shield her from the effects of my anger.'

"I rushed from the house, Miriam. I was afraid I should strike him if I stayed a moment longer. But I defy him. Come with me. Fly this union with one you do not love, and be mine. I have a friend in yonder town who is a clergyman of the Church of England; he will unite us, and we will leave this land, and return to my beautiful old home in Devonshire, where you, my bride, will be the beloved mistress of my broad domains."

"Oh!" cried I, wringing my hands together in my agony, "how can I meet my father again? how can I meet Mr. Bedford?"

"You love them better than you do me, Miriam?" he said, moodily.

"No, no! it is quite a different feeling, Vernon, quite a different, but oh, as strong a feeling, that I have towards these two. It is something awful, I feel it already, to provoke the anger of a parent; and I charge you by your honor, and your hopes of heaven, never, never tempt me again to a clandestine union," I replied, while tears streamed over my cheeks.

"You will marry that hated man your father has provided for you, I suspect, to carry out your romantic ideas of duty!" said Vernon, with a sneer.

"Not as long as you live, unkind Vernon, to lacerate the heart which, through you, is already wounded. I wish not to reproach you; I cannot, I would not; but hear me now declare that Heaven itself must interpose in its wrath to force me to marry this man!" I exclaimed, in an earnest tone. * * * * * * * * Oh God! was it blasphemy! that thou didst register it, and pour out the vials of thy wrath on my sinful and disobedient head, in an hour when I dreamed not of thy retribution? * * * And now flowed into Woodreve the waters of bitterness! And in they flow still, like a Stygean flood. I have rejected Mr. Willoughby, and reproached him for "taking an ungenerous advantage of my father's approbation of his suit, by forcing his attentions on me when he must have seen I was so averse to them." He looked astonished; and after several minutes' profound silence, bade me good morning, and, without seeing my father, left Woodreve; nor has he returned, although four days have elapsed. My father is growing harsh with me; he suspects me of seeing Vernon, and is displeased at Mr. Willoughby's absence. Oh human weakness, oh fainting heart, oh wavering will, why not be strong in duty? Why shrink back from a wholesome draught, because it is bitter? Why do I continue to yield to this mad, but beloved Vernon's entreaties to see him, only to listen to his passionate pleadings for me to marry him clandestinely, then forsake the home, the land of my birth, my father, who is very dear to me, and all, all forever, to seek with him a refuge of happiness in England? * * Somehow and somewhere he has seen Winnie, and won her completely over to his interests. With a love of intrigue which is peculiar to her race and color, she readily yields to all his suggestions, and persuades me, in her odd way, to elope with Vernon. She says: "Massa Shirley will soon get over it, and have you both back at Woodreve. He deserves to be worrit well, for crossing you so. I never see any good come out o' sich perceedings in my life long; and its abserlutely shameful. He's sich a nice, beautiful critter, and would make you a proper husband too." She brings me his letters, his flowers, his messages. I get no rest. There are no smiles at Woodreve for me now, save in my dead mother's pictured face; all are cold, saturnine, and stern. Mr. Bedford is much in town now; it would be a consolation if *he* would look more displeased and less sad— * * * Cold blow the autumnal winds. The flowers are blighted, the leaves dead and fallen. Dark and sullen gleams the river, and heavy clouds creep sullenly over the gloomy sky. The trees of the forest, with the long gray moss floating from their naked boughs, and the grape-vines, and fantastic chains of withered honeysuckle and jasmine, linking them

together, look like an endless army of wizard giants, fettered by some weird enchantment—and struggling, panting to be free. How impotently they wave their arms, how madly lift they their hoary heads to heaven. * * * A note from Vernon! He is suddenly recalled to England, and departs the day after to-morrow. He begs to see me; he waits for me beside the fountain of Hecuba—a fitting one was that baptismal name, oh fountain! I wrap my shawl around me, and tie hastily a veil over my head, and bidding Winnie say I slept if I was inquired for, stole forth, and glided swiftly to the well-known haunt. * * I thought I had strength for this trial. I thought I would never yield; but oh! I cannot, I cannot part with Vernon thus. I will not rave, although I am nearly mad. He has prevailed, but only on these conditions. I have promised to marry him to-morrow at midnight; he is to depart immediately with the clergyman who performs the rite; the witnesses are to be sworn to secrecy, and he is to give into my possession the certificate of our marriage, duly signed by the parties present and ourselves. I am to remain at Woodreve until he returns, a year hence, from England. And where are these stolen nuptials to take place? At my mother's grave, over her dust, at the solemn midnight watch, am I to plight those vows which make me the bride of Vernon! I walk my room—the limits are too narrow—would I were out on yonder mountain-side, where I could *howl* forth my agony! I pause, and write a few words, then recommence my fretted walk. I cannot even weep. There is a clamor below! what means it? A running to and fro with lights—a tap at my door! * * * * My father was taken suddenly ill, with symptoms of paralysis. Oh, with what relenting love hung I over his pale and senseless form. No hand did I allow to touch him save my own; and when he recovered, and turned with a smile so sad, so imploring, towards me, I—I —*was almost saved.* He kept me by his side, with my hand in his; his speech was broken; but I could understand him whenever he murmured, "*my child,*" or "*darling.*" This evening, he is quite out of danger. Mr. Bedford and our physician never leave his room. 11 *o'clock.* He made a sign for me to leave him, and go to rest; then drew my face down to his, and kissed my cheek. I knelt a moment by his bed, and, pressing his hands to my bosom, leaned my head over on his breast; then, pale and cold as marble, went I forth to prepare for my bridal. * * * * * It was accomplished! duly, solemnly, and legally was the ceremony performed which united me to Vernon; but two weeks have elapsed, and he still lingers. Two weeks longer finds him still here. My father is convalescing rapidly, and little dreams of

my hypocrisy, for nothing less is it. Vernon, my husband, braves, dares everything to see me, and in this Winnie aids him; but I cannot chide her. I fancy she believes it is her first duty on earth, and the object for which she was created, to make everything yield to her wishes for my happiness, to bend every circumstance subservient to it. By some logical and ingenious train of reasoning, which she does not condescend to explain, she has come to the conclusion that the whole matter is a signal triumph over Mr. Bedford and the *books*, which she detests as cordially as ever; and this idea encourages her zeal. Books! would that I had never lived so much alone with these silent, fascinating, but dangerous companions—books of such a character as have had a tendency to refine to the highest degree every impassioned and romantic sentiment of my mind, without adding strength to my judgment, or elevating above a circle of mere fantasies my soul!—which have learned me a dangerous and worldly creed in the worship of the ideal, and taught me to shrink coldly from the duties and realities of more active life, until my whole being looks out on the world through a morbid and distorted medium! I am conscious of it all—I deplore it; but oh! what kind angel will apply a remedy to the evil! I know not how to minister to such a deep-seated and subtle disease. * * * I feel that I have injured my father by this betrayal of his confidence in my truth. I have repaid his long and well-tried affection by ingratitude. I know I have wounded him in the tenderest and most sensitive chord of his proud heart; but as yet he knows it not; the keen blow pierced him in the dark, and awful will be his agony when the poison ripens. Oh, what bitterness has mingled with my brief rapture! The gloom that gathers around my heart in the intervals of Vernon's absence is intolerable; sad presentiments weigh me down, and mournful shapes, gliding over dark billows, haunt my dreams. I am sometimes tempted to go with him. But when he comes, all is sunshine in my heart, and I yield myself up entirely to the fleeting rapture of the moment. * * * To-morrow he leaves me. Twelve long months will drag away before I behold him, my husband, again. He is just gone. He brought me the copy of my miniature which he promised me, set in one of those curious old medallions, and attached to an Indian chain, precisely similar to the others. The likeness is faithful, and the execution fine and artistic. But see! there *is* a difference between this medallion and the others. There is a tiny diamond set in the spring; but pshaw! what a trifle to note down at such a moment. He gave me a small package containing the certificate of our marriage, and a sealed letter addressed to my father, which I am to deliver to him in the event of his dis-

covering our secret. Oh, aching heart! Oh, burning brain! how will ye bear this pang of separation and absence! * * One of his servants will remain in town, to whom all his letters to me are to be directed under cover, who will deliver them to me without delay. He is faithful, Vernon thinks, and trustworthy; and is one of the party who witnessed our marriage. * * He is gone! * * Three long years have fled, and on each year came a shadow of darkness; for each one there was a vial of wrath. I resume my pen merely to note down the events which have turned my heart to stone. I feel a thousand years old. The sun went down at noon, and thence followed a starless night of gloom in my life. Like the form of some proud Cleopatra, which has been sleeping in the catacombs beneath the dust of centuries, suddenly exhumed, walk I among my kind. I acknowledge no law but *pride;* no softening influences ever shed their dews on my frozen heart. I stand alone; desolate under the infliction of my punishment. I never saw Vernon again. On the Bahama Banks, during a terrific storm, his vessel was wrecked, and *every soul*, except his servant, and one of the crew, *perished.* Six months after his departure, the poor wretch, who had been picked up the next day by a Dutch brig bound in, wayworn and in rags, found his way back to Woodreve, and told me the awful disaster. He was near *him*, when he went down, and could not aid him, but heard him, ere he sank forever, shout above the storm, "Return to Miriam!" I knew not what followed, but have since learned that my father and Mr. Bedford discovered then, from my frantic ravings, that I was not only a widowed wife, but would become, ere the summer leaves and flowers were blighted by autumnal frosts, a mother. I was in a raving delirium for weeks, and when consciousness returned, there were two patient, sorrow-stricken old men watching beside me. After a few days, during one of my calmer intervals, for returning memory brought sweeping tempests of agony over my mind, I remembered the letter, and the certificate of my marriage, and, with a trembling hand and averted face, presented it to my father. He glanced over it, and murmuring "Thank God," stooped down and kissed me, then left the room. I cannot divine what fears he was delivered from by the sight of it; but he was away a day or two, and when he returned, he was more frequently with me, and looked less reproachfully, less sadly on me. But oh, I could not forgive, as he did; he was too stern, too uncompromising with my lost Vernon; he might have yielded his prejudices, I thought, to insure his child's happiness, and yet I knew that I had wronged him. And thus it was. There was no feeling of yore between us; we both suffered; and neither could

understand or appreciate the peculiar trial of the other. I was transformed from a gay, joyous creature, to a silent, passionless woman, and a strange, cold sadness settled about my heart, that made existence almost a blank to me. * * * And no light, no rest, dawned on the torn-tossed heart, until they laid my first-born, the miniature image of his lost father—my breathing, beautiful babe, in my arms. * * * My boy was just one year old when my father was prostrated by a sudden illness, which his physician declared from the first would end fatally. Then I saw it all in its proper light, how I had grieved and deceived the fond parent who had so entirely trusted to my honor and pride of character, not to act contrary to his expressed wishes. As a parent, I felt how I had outraged every high and tender feeling by my breach of confidence, and for the moment Vernon was forgotten. I knelt by his bedside, and bathed his hand with tears—*the first I had shed.* I besought him to speak, and tell me I was forgiven; to bless me. All night clung I to that cold hand, as if to drag him away from the grave. Fondly I smoothed back the silver hair, which I had helped to whiten, from his pallid forehead, and pressed my warm, throbbing lips to his, to try and restore to them a genial heat

"Oh, my father, I deserve these agonies—they have purified my heart with fire—I am your child again—speak, my father—speak to your repentant child!" I shrieked.

"Madam!" said the grave physician, "absolute quiet is necessary, if you please. My honored patient may linger some few days longer, and, as is usual in these cases, recover his speech before death—but let me beseech you to be calm. You injure yourself, Mrs. Vernon."

"Sir," I exclaimed, "it is your trade to see people die; you can witness the agony of severing ties like these in an unmoved and scientific way! but I am his child, I wounded him in a tender point, and oh, my God, perhaps broke his proud, loving heart! I *will* speak—I *will.*"

The physician turned away, elevating his eyebrows and shrugging his shoulders; but I, unheeding his professional anger, knelt again, and leaning over the pale sufferer whispered: "Father, dear father, speak to me; I will never—never deceive you again, dear father, but try by a lifetime of duty to atone for my fault. Oh, speak to me! Oh God, restore him a little while. Come hither, thou healer," I screamed, springing up and grasping the astonished physician's arm: "Come hither, and tell me if he breathes—if he will not live—see, his eyes unclose—my heart's agony has roused

him from the very trance of death. My father! oh, my father, forgive me!"

He slowly turned his head on his pillow, and gazed with a fond, but solemn expression on my white, troubled face, and whispered, "Poor child—you have suffered much."

"Oh, my father," was still my agonized cry, "forgive my error! Tell me what sacrifice I can make—what thing I can perform, to atone for the pain I have inflicted on you. Speak, my father! My life is nothing—the world has nothing in comparison so precious as your forgiveness."

"Miriam—my child," he murmured feebly, while he laid his hand on my head, "I was too harsh—too unrelenting in my prejudices—but God forgive us both for the past! I am dying, and there is one wish—only one—of my heart ungratified. *You can grant that wish*, Miriam, and make my last hours tranquil."

"Name it, dearest father! I promise, before you name it, that it shall be complied with," I exclaimed.

"You are young, Miriam—you need a protector—your son needs one—and—I have but little breath left—promise me——to——. marry—Willoughby. He was my choice, when that——but never mind the past now—Willoughby still loves—you—child—promise—me"—he gasped.

I expected not this; but I promised him. Before Heaven, still kneeling by his side, with his icy, stiffening hand in mine, and in the presence of Jasper, Mr. Bedford, and Dr. Ashley, I vowed to perform—this *sacrifice*.

"I can no longer see—or hear—you—Miriam," he gasped feebly out; "you have nobly atoned—you have—my entire—forgiveness. God—forgive—me—as—I forgive—you———Jasper—come—Bedford—bless——"

And then it was all over. * * * * My grief was silent and bitter. I was learning more perfectly the art to control and subdue, beneath a calm exterior, heart-pangs which almost maddened me. The coffin-lid was stained with my tears, was still damp with the bitter drops which welled up like an infusion of wormwood from my heart, when the marble seal of the sepulchre closed over it, and he was left in death by the side of her he so fondly loved in life. I was borne, fainting, away from that solemn place of the dead, where, nearly two years before, at midnight, I had become the bride of Vernon. Ominous nuptials! A nation mourned the loss of the old patriot, and honored through its Senate his venerated name, by proposing suitable resolutions to his memory, and erecting a monument to his services and virtues.

From that mournful and second period of woe, until I plighted my vows to Mr. Willoughby, no seeming change passed over me, beyond a gradual paling of my cheeks, and the settling of a stern and cold expression on my countenance. I was silent, but courteous, and performed the duties of a wife in a regular and exemplary manner. Mr. Willoughby thought me more sensible and beautiful than ever. My dignified manner, my perfect self-possession and quiet courtesy, *all the results of mental torture*, increased his admiration of my character, and he thought himself the most enviable being on earth. My father had left my brother Jasper and myself joint heirs of the Woodreve estate, but Mr. Willoughby, a few days after our marriage, effected an arrangement with him for the purchase of his share, and, to my astonishment, presented me with the deeds, duly executed, securing it to myself and little Arthur, with exclusive privileges to dispose of it when and how I saw proper. This was a noble act. His character and mind were of a sterling order, and his principles honorable and high-toned; *but I could never love him.* I could only return his devoted and untiring affection, by indulging kindly all his peculiar tastes, and trying to make his home agreeable by doing the honors of his house with dignified propriety, and welcoming with polite cordiality his friends. Somehow, his daughter Edith, a black-eyed, beautiful, warm-hearted little tyrant, who had ruled her father and his household ever since her mother's death, nestled herself into a niche of my heart, and, as I live, she is the only strange thing that has found admission there since it was made desolate. I gained the most absolute influence over her. She seemed to defy me not to love her; to dare me not to admit her into the chilled sanctuary of my affections. Willoughby noticed this, in his own peculiar and quiet way, by constantly luring Arthur away from my side, and bearing him about in his arms, or on his shoulder over the lawn, until the joyous shouts of the child made the welkin ring; and finally tried to make a little centaur of him, by purchasing a pony for his especial use, so gentle and sure-footed that the little Saxon almost lived in the saddle. My life was calm. I enjoyed its perfect repose. Like the ocean after a tempest, all seemed bright and at rest, over the sunken wrecks it had made. Mr. Willoughby was my friend—my consoler—my protector; he loved me unselfishly, and loved my son; but this was not to last. Two years had not passed away, ere symptoms of a rapid decline developed themselves in his system, and, in a few short months, the noble and manly heart of Mark Willoughby ceased to throb. He was sincerely regretted; his loss was deeply felt by me. I honored and respected his virtues, and appreciated

highly the affection which I could only return by a cold but grateful duty. He left his immense wealth entirely at my disposal, and besought me to be "a tender mother to little Edith, as I had been a faithful wife to him." "He could in no other way," he said, "testify to the world the high regard he had for me than by leaving his child and fortune entirely to my discretion and management." * * * After a decent time had elapsed, I removed from Glade Holmes to Woodreve, and determined never to leave it again, but live secluded from the world, and devoted to my children and the intellectual pursuits I loved. Poor *Maummy* still lived, but her life had been a sad one from the time my father discovered that she had aided me to deceive him. He had vented the first fury of his wrath on her, and banished her to a remote farm he possessed in a lower county. Haply for me, I was insensible to the ravings of his aggrieved heart, and, by the time I recovered, my anguish and sufferings had so wrought on his old tender feelings, that he never pained me by alluding to the past until he was dying. He had, with Mr. Bedford's assistance, fully ascertained the legality of my union with my poor, lost Vernon; had sought out the clergyman who officiated on the occasion; seen the witnesses, whose names were appended to the certificate; then announced through the press our marriage, and his disastrous death, in the same notice, on the same day, and transmitted the papers to the Vernon family in England. His sense of propriety was then satisfied, and he never referred to the subject again. I recalled Winnie, who was almost distracted with joy at getting back to Woodreve. She frightened the children by chuckling in her own way and weeping violently alternately for an entire week, after which the gold hoops, the madras turban, and amber beads were in all their glory, and she recovered her spirits so rapidly that it was a difficult thing to realize she had ever lost them. How she loved my little Arthur Vernon; how she followed and watched him; how, in transports of queerly expressed affection, she would fold him to her bosom until, almost suffocated, he would seize her hoops and drag at them until the pain caused her to release him; or grasp her turban, which was the pride of her life, and hurl it into the fire, while she, in her effort to rescue it, freed him, and, hopeless of effecting her object, would stand with her grizzled head bare, chuckling and shaking her fist at him as he shouted at the blaze! He had his father's wild, impetuous spirit. * * * My cup was not yet drained of the lees of bitterness. I will try to record the disaster, which followed the pouring forth of the last vial of wrath on my desolate head, in sane and rational language. * * * It was an even-

ing in October. A balmy mist floated over the earth, and the moon looked lovingly down through its dreamy veil. I was alone in my library, an addition I had made to the old mansion at Woodreve since my father's death; and had been thinking, oh, how mournfully! of the unhappy and eventful past, when I was startled from my sad reverie by Arthur's bounding in from the lawn, through the half-opened window, and throwing himself, weary and exhausted with play, on my bosom. He wound his dimpled arms about my neck, and kissed my cheeks and lips with a perfect *abandon* of childish love, then nestled his head, with its wealth of golden curls, on my shoulder, and fell asleep. He wore around his neck the Indian chain, and the medallion containing the miniature of myself, which his father had copied for me, and, fearing it might become twisted too closely around his throat, I unclasped it, and wound it around his arm, and fastened the clasp. All this I perfectly remember. * * * He slept so sweetly that I could not bear to waken him, and laid him gently on the cushions of the divan on which I sat; then covered him with my cashmere shawl, and kneeling down by him parted his long sunny curls and kissed his snowy forehead. I afterwards closed the window, fearing the night air would give him cold, and went out to preside at the tea-table; for Mr. Bedford and two other guests, with my brother Jasper, were then at Woodreve; after which I led the way with them to the drawing-room. At bedtime, I went into the library with Winnie to have the child removed to his own little couch by mine; but, oh God! *he was gone!* There was the print of his darling head on the pillow, and there lay a few flowers he had in his hand when he came from the lawn to me. He must have been borne off very stealthily, for there was no sign of his having awoke; no disturbance of the cushions; no disorder anywhere. They had wrapped the shawl about him without disturbing his sleep, and taken him away.

How fruitless was the long search that was made after the stray lamb; how princely were the rewards and ransoms offered for his recovery, I will not say. Such agony as mine cannot be statistical in its details. *But it was all in vain.* Not a breath of tidings was heard, but that an Indian girl had been seen by two hunters, travelling eastward, with a fair-haired, white child in her arms. This was all. The hardy men whom I sent beyond the western mountains, to the southern savannahs, and among the Indian tribes of the regions surrounding the northern lakes, returned hopeless, received their well-earned recompense, and departed silently. I then determined to go to Europe; I thought —oh, wild dream of a despairing heart!—that I might, perchance,

find him there. Mr. Bedford went with me, but, oh! worse than hopeless was that voyage—that long journey! It was only among the ruins of ancient grandeur and the wrecks of former glory that my throbbing heart ceased its wild tuggings on my life. Amidst them, as among familiar friends, I held mournful converse —they whispered, as the wind softly fanned the creeping vines that clung around the lonely columns and shattered altars, "*We were;*" and my heart echoed: "As ye were, so once was I; but not the proudest thing among ye has been so rudely crushed." * * * Like a weary pilgrim, who has sought in vain the shrine of his devotion, I returned to Woodreve. I lived on—on—on—whiter—colder, and more hopeless, until fifteen long years had rolled by. I never talked of my lost child, after I had hopelessly done all that a mother's love could suggest to recover him. I never refer to him now; I turned to Edith, my step-daughter, for that mental occupation which alone prevented madness; and, although her every wild laugh and merry word was like the thrusting in of a sharp thorn on my heart; though every caress and newly-developed beauty made me almost shriek out at times, so bitter were the comparisons of my memory, I bore *all—all* in silence, nor checked her laughter; but returned the caress, and trained the gifted young mind to high and ennobling pursuits; directed its judgment by my own sad experience; encouraged its refined tastes and generous impulses, and tried to implant principles in her soul which will make her a noble, true-hearted woman fitted for that contention with the stern realities of life which must come—even to her.

* * * "*The wrath of heaven,*" which I once so madly invoked, *did* interpose, and I have been tossed on the whirlwind. I know nothing of its healing consolations. I know not how to seek them; I know not whether so blighted and bruised, so proud and defiant a spirit as mine could receive them, even knew it how to claim them. God help me!

Mr. Bedford is a great deal with me. Edith almost worships him.

* * * * *

Thus broke off this unconnected record of the painful events of Mrs. Willoughby's life. Edith frequently paused to wipe away the tears which blinded her during its perusal. It was all new to her, and this first glimpse at the real pangs of life made her tremble. With the manuscript in her hand, she fell asleep towards morning; but so distressing were her dreams that, ere her maid came in to dress her at seven o'clock, she had risen and was sitting at the window, lost in thought. "Mr. Bedford is waiting for his

tea, Miss Etha, and Missis is gone to town two hours ago," said the girl, as she stooped down to lace the gaiters around Edith's symmetrical ankle.

"Mamma gone to town? Surely you are mistaken, Paula."

"No, indeed! She went in de carriage at five o'clock, and told me not to disturb you. But Massa Bedford is fidgetting and axing for you so often, dat I thought I'd come up, just to see if you was awake, Miss Etha," replied the girl.

When Edith's toilet was completed, she sent Paula down, and, wrapping her step-mother's diary again in its envelope, and tying it carefully with the same silken cord, ran into her chamber and thrust it far out of sight, under the pillows of Mrs. Willoughby's bed; and then hurried down, with a somewhat saddened face, to give Mr. Bedford his breakfast.

CHAPTER V.

"Fashion," says Hazlitt, "is gentility running away from vulgarity, and afraid of being overtaken by it. It is a sign that the two things are not far asunder."

We are sorely tempted to sermonize, but will refrain, and merely pronounce a brief exordium, ere we illustrate our text. It is not ill natured to observe facts apparent to all; it is no scandal to note events which every hour find their parallel in this world of ours. We do not expect to create a single new idea, and fear we cannot annihilate one old one, or pronounce a solitary sententious novelty in the way of philosophical reflections. We will not presume to judge the world, nor even exhibit its follies, with the same *nonchalance* as a keeper of a royal menagerie would his beasts, nor, with an air of supernal authority, satirize its defects. It would be an endless work of supererogation to attempt it. For behold the carnival of life! Mark the broad satire it pronounces on itself. In endless processions moves the pageant along, to the music of its own vapid imaginings; while the nasal braying of asses wearing the royal skins of dead lions, and the gleaming of wolfish eyes beneath the stolen fleece of sheep, impart a bravery and consequence to it which sometimes make simple lookers-on quake with terror. Amidst the throng flutters the never-dying jackdaw, in its borrowed plumes, condescendingly grand, while costly ovations follow its progress.

It is the representative of modern scholastic learning and wit; a fitting emblem of shallow pretensions and metaphysical absurdities; as, in olden times, the Phœnix of Heliopolis was the incarnation of an immortal idea of the divinity of genius. In unrivalled majesty, the gorgeously plumed pea-fowl is borne forward on a throne of gold by the votaries of fashion; its burnished Argus eyes glittering in the sunshine, its vestments sprinkled as with dust from Golconda, and shimmering, like a thing of light, in changeful hues of purple and azure. Who will dare accuse *it* of discordant notes, or presume to allude to the frightful claws?—ungainly, plebeian, and unsightly, which it shrinks from with loathing itself. And is there no tolling bell, no roaring sunset cannon, reverberating over the campagna of life, to call the proud revellers from the carnival to the altar? No! What has fashion to do with repentance and prayer? It hews out broken cisterns in its progress, and builds rich shrines of gold, which no vulgar hand may touch—shrines on whose outer vails the HOLY NAMES are written to impart a sacerdotal dignity to the worship of Mammon, but where no divine oracles are heard, telling of the pure in heart; of meekness, lowliness, and justice; of starving prisoners of charity, which bear patiently one another's burdens; of the naked or the hungry. The story of Lazarus and Dives is not known among them; but we pause. It is sickening to the soul to moralize on heartless follies; on treasons to the high allegiance due from the creature to his GOD. It is better to laugh, if we cannot check their lofty assumptions, which play such fantastic tricks before high heaven; it is better to laugh while the show goes by, and the bells jingle merrily—*if we can.* Now from the tower prison, dear reader, poised on a perilous abutment which exposes us to the winged arrows from below, we will play the part of Rebecca, and rehearse the passing scenes. From our distant post of observation we can identify no personalities, save one or two, which in their native goodness rise so near heaven, that we dwell with rapture on their deeds as on their countenances. Imagination, the potent enchanter, is beside us, our chief aid, who interposes between our eyes and the sometimes misty distance a telescope whose lenses make all clear, for they are drops from the crystalline waters of the ideal world.

In a quarter of the town known to the *beau-monde* as Chiswicke Square, amidst many stately dwellings which composed a nucleus of brilliant fashion, stood a mansion of more than ordinary pretension and style, which would have been pronounced by the critical in such matters decidedly handsome, had not certain incongruities led to the inevitable conclusion that the bad taste of its owners had interfered materially with the original designs and judgment

of the architect. It was not, however, so isolated a case; and when casual observers merely remarked it, they with a very connoisseur-like air pronounced it exceedingly fine. It gloried in a spacious marble portico, supported by fluted Ionic columns, and balconied drawing-room windows, draped within with embroidered lace and crimson damask. Those in the second and third stories were a pane shorter and a sash narrower, suggesting an idea of economy in the saving of so much costly rose-colored glass. They were also richly draped within. The front of the whole pile was ornamented with a fantastic arabesque parapet, so elaborately carved that it would have thrown a China-man in raptures. The evidences of wealth indicated by these exterior appliances were more than confirmed by the frequent appearance of their foreign equipage at the curb, with its liveried footmen and dignified coachmen, whose ebony countenances wore a look of supercilious grandeur in their high estate.

The De Veres *were* wealthy, and enjoyed the results of long, honest, laborious toil, in a style which is by no means peculiar in this world of ours. They expended prodigally that which, according to the ethics of the world, was legitimately their own, more to suit their own ideas of pleasure than the disagreeable morality of those turtle-like souls who creep behind the age, and declare incessantly that such things are incompatible with Christianity, and the simplicity of a noble republic.

That power with which gold endows its possessors had elevated the De Veres to the enviable rank of leaders of the *haut ton*, a position which set a seal of authority on their importance, and impressed them fully with the responsibility of guarding the sacred precincts of the charmed circle from the contamination of vulgar aspirants after the same honors, by assuming a degree of high and ultra exclusiveness.

Honest old John De Vere, who felt a noble pride in that perseverance of character, unflinching integrity, and prudent economy which had enabled him to overcome triumphantly the obstructions and difficulties which impeded his pathway to fortune, was occasionally heard to refer, over his foaming tankard of ale, "to the hard times when he was a caulker," and "the year he abandoned that business for the more profitable one of sail-making;" and usually declared, with a bumper, "that King George on his throne was not so proud or happy a man as he, the day he purchased his first ship." In the simplicity of his warm, honest heart, he had always looked forward with keen anticipations of pleasure to the period when, having amassed a certain amount of gains, he would rest from his labors, and, with his family and old associates in

trade, spend, in what he considered rational enjoyments, the declining days of his life. He dreamed not of changes, or new toils, or far more feverish anxieties than it had cost him to amass his large fortune. Blissfully ignorant until the evil day came, if any one had told him the story of Sisyphus, he would have pronounced him, without the formula of investigation, "a ne'er do well, idle blockhead."

But Mr. De Vere had a wife; and from the hour he announced to her that his fortune amounted to half a million, and yielded to her unwearied solicitations to retire from business, he was a miserable and dissatisfied man; for Mrs. De Vere was an ambitious and enterprising person, and this was only the "beginning of the end" of her husband's peace. Her next object was, by dint of every effort that her woman's wit suggested, to persuade or literally worry him into the belief that their name—their original name—Divers, was excessively vulgar, and must, by an especial act of legislative power, be changed to the more aristocratic patronymic of De Vere, "which, after all," argued the *cara spousa*, "is only *Frenchifying it.*" After this important point was conceded, and successfully concluded, to the lady's high satisfaction, she set her ingenuity to work to get away from the comfortable, substantial dwelling in the eastern section of the city, which to her was rife with old and vulgar associations, to the more elegant and fashionable neighborhood of Chiswicke Square. She was a woman; she had a woman's will, and succeeded. The genius of Aladdin's lamp was not more his slave than circumstances were to her indomitable energy of character.

Then commenced the struggle—the toiling, the heart-burning, the jostling, and time-serving, which always attend the efforts of the uninitiated to scale the heights of fashion. And from the well-bred circle to which they aspired—for which they had abandoned old and true friends with human hearts—from amidst the meretricious glare, and glitter, and hypocrisy of there conventionalities, which made up its world, they heard sneering inquiries, which brought the honest blood to their cheeks, and were compelled to listen to insulting and supercilious language, which conveyed reproofs not to be misunderstood, on their aspiring presumption, that *almost* made Mrs. De Vere's bold heart quail, and quite succeeded in driving back the honest old tradesman to a quiet and solitary life. It is probable that she had never heard of Hannibal nor Bonaparte; nevertheless, she possessed in an eminent degree their spirit. Where barriers presented themselves, even if cloud-capped, to threaten the success of her object, the obstacle

only stimulated her efforts, only nerved her heart to gigantic exertions, until she triumphed.

The exchange was an exciting and pleasing one to Mrs. De Vere. Far withdrawn from the irksome and unequal warfare, her husband gave it all up to her, while he cursed, in the bitterness of his aggrieved heart, that senseless, soulless ambition that had thus deprived him, in his old age, of the privileged comforts of HOME. It was not the natural emulation, which is allowable, indeed highly praiseworthy, to rise to a higher level of enjoyment in the associations of more intellectual and polished society, and the prerogatives of a better position in the social scale, that fretted and displeased him; he could have tolerated, nay appreciated that; but it was the tearing away of the serene image of Peace from her pure pedestal in his dwelling, and the setting up of a golden calf in her place, which was worshipped merely, as he well knew, because it *was* gold. It was the everlasting incense that his wife, as high-priestess of the shrine, offered to it; the exacting and time-wasting nature of a worship that deprived him of rest and happiness, driving him sullenly back on himself. Their eldest son Frederick, who inherited his mother's ambitious qualities and fine black eyes, was given up entirely to her management in his boyhood, on condition that she never interfered with Mr. De Vere's plans for Harry, who was a few years younger. She was well content; for, with her usual penetration, she had long, long ago discovered that Harry was of a grovelli[illegible] practical turn, with other material qualities which would have baffled entirely any schemes she might have laid to make a fine, fashionable gentleman of him as he grew to manhood. But Frederick, she was determined, should be the *ne plus ultra* of elegance and fashion. So he was accordingly raced through a collegiate course, and afterwards, by some strange misapprehension of his abilities, made a lawyer of. Possibly he had promised, on honor, never to practice, for he did not attempt it, but lounged away the two or three succeeding years of his life Adonizing before his large mirror, and learning, with devoted zeal, the science of fashion, until he was suddenly smitten with a desire to travel in Europe. This was a point on which Mr. De Vere, as banker to the concern, had to be consulted. But he was, to use an expressive phrase, doggedly and invulnerably obstinate in his refusal, until it was reported to him, by the family physician, that his son's health was in a most precarious state, from which the most serious results might be apprehended unless he immediately sought a change of climate; and the south of France and the Mediterranean were advised as the most bland and curative latitudes for his malady. Then came the mother's

pleading—for she loved this her favorite son as much as her selfish and corroded heart could love anything; and the natural instincts of the old man's own unsuspecting nature, which most of all prevailed. Then followed the excitement of preparing a most extravagant outfit, and the pleasing *quietus* of a *carte blanche* for the invalid's expenses abroad—and he was gone. It is unnecessary to state that, ere the last purple vision of his native shores melted away on the billowy horizon, Frederick De Vere had entirely recovered his health. "I am of Athens," was once an eloquent and all-sufficent passport to the most princely circles of the earth; in these latter days, an American claims the same prerogative abroad; it is to be presumed on the same basis and authority, and it is good-naturedly conceded to him.

Young De Vere exhibited his letters of introduction, and dashed in a princely style in London; was called "mi-lord" in Paris, "your serene highness" on the Rhine; associated with dukes, princes, and counts in the old historical cities of Italy; and in Greece was most pertinaciously mistaken for a Spanish Condé. Wearied with travel, he returned to Paris, where he was ere long "wrapped in Elysium." Enjoyments of a nature he understood presented themselves to him in the charming capital. He felt that the time he had spent in visiting antique ruins, whose classic sites and stories were voiceless to him, was a "deuced loss"—the memories of Greece and Italy fatigued him; but here flowed the bright fountains of an Epicurean world, revivifying and exhaustless, beside whose spray life stood smiling, and crowned with roses. Between the opera-houses, the magnificent gaming-saloons, and the luxurious eating-houses, where the appetite is regaled on the most piquant dishes, and the thirst quenched with the most delicious wines; and lounging in the boudoirs of the most splendid women in Paris, and entertaining high select parties at his hotel, every moment of his time was filled up, the only skeleton among his enjoyments being the gaunt, chilling, and doomlike idea of—HOME. But at last came the time when he had no excuse to offer for further stay on the Continent, and hither he had now come, to be the petted idol of the season and the crowning-glory of his admiring mother, who felt secretly awed at his superior fashion and immense knowledge of the world. The two Misses De Vere had been emancipated from a fashionable French boarding-school a year previous to his return, and made their *début* in society with a decided prospect of being belles. They were both slender and pretty, with small hands and feet, and those delicate, finely cut features, so characteristic of American beauty. And yet a greater contrast never existed than between the sisters. Elizabeth, or

Bessie, as she *could* be called, was the wit of the family, who rattled and laughed incessantly at everything and everybody, and most of all at her own *bon-mots* and Alice. A pair of fine flashing black eyes, and an even, dazzling set of teeth, made radiant a countenance not deficient in intelligence or good-nature. Alice was indolent, cold, and proud in her nature. Her countenance was as passionless as golden hair, languid blue eyes, a straight nose, and small mouth, could render it. She seldom exerted herself to speak, except in monosyllables, and wherever she moved, a faint odor of jasmine, or the delicate perfume of ottar of roses, scented the atmosphere. These were her favorite extracts; but the acme of her enjoyments was silence, a French novel, subdued lights, and cushions; but there is *nul bien sans peine*, and Bessie's gay laugh, and queer, rattling conversation, were the grating and inharmonious chords that forever intruded on her sublime combination of enjoyments.

Harry De Vere, connected with them by the closest ties of consanguinity, was as unlike his race as if he had been an utter stranger. Nature set her own superior mark of nobility on the boy at his birth, and, as he grew to manhood, many a lofty quality developed itself, which ripened with his years. He had never experienced much tenderness from his mother, who, hopeless of moulding his high, strange nature to the puerile standard of her own wishes, regarded his sturdy, well-knit frame, and round fresh cheeks, as indications of incurable vulgarity which no art could polish. Day after day, she chided him for some infringement on her aristocratic regulations, and abused, in coarse and unmeasured terms, that grovelling spirit which derived more pleasure from handling a saw or hammer, and making childish experiments in mechanism, which showed that GENIUS was brooding over its germ in the boy's mind, than from the more refined and courtly pursuits of fashion. His hands, which were somewhat roughened, were her aversion, and his unpretending style of dress her disgust; so the youth was driven to the shelter of his old father's side, and the two clung trustingly together, giving back affection for affection, and slaking the thirst of their hearts with the soft dews that distilled from such kindred love. It was clearly apparent to Mr. De Vere that Harry had a genius for mechanism; a fact that afforded him the most unalloyed satisfaction, and more than compensated for the loneliness and disappointments which had chilled his later years. Nothing in life delighted him so much as to stand and watch the lad while he experimented ingeniously with cog-wheels, levers, and cranks, in the apartment which he had fitted up, in a distant corner of the mansion, for his son's exclusive use; or walk with

him through manufactories, and explore the grand motive power of steam-ships, while his wondering, eager eyes inspected every part with an almost intuitive appreciation of its uses, until the old man's heart brightened, and rose higher and higher, like the tides of ocean, obeying the silent influence of the radiant and mysterious moon. He saw in this child of his heart the regeneration of his name; the rest were aliens, children of the world and its selfish follies. This was *all* his own—this one, the noblest and purest, had been cast aside, like an obnoxious weed, from the maternal heart, and now it was twining and blossoming around him, imparting joy and strength to his life. It would one day become strong enough to lean on; a staff of consolation, as he descended the narrowing slope of life, to penetrate the shadows of the great valley, whence he would no more return. He felt that his hopes were prophetic and exalted; but it was in silence; for he was a man of few words; and as to telling, laying bare all these communings of his spirit to Harry, such a thought never entered his mind. He loved him too well to tempt him to supineness by premature and injudicious praise, or an excessive exhibition of his absorbing affection for him. He only encouraged and indulged his peculiar tastes, and listened to his plans with a quiet smile, which convinced the boy that all was right between them. In the mean while, Harry's mental occupations were of a high and progressive order. With but little education himself, Mr. De Vere entertained a profound respect for letters; it cannot, therefore, be supposed that Harry's mind was neglected. Every advantage of an intellectual kind that was attainable was afforded him, and nobly he profited by it Study did not weaken the energies of his will, but strengthened it, fed it, until it grew like a young Titan. It was the means by which he would be aided to effect his end. He had not clearly defined what that end was, except that it was a something lofty, beneficial to his kind, and to science, towards which his course would be upward and onward. The coldness and negligence he experienced from his mother and the rest pained, but did not embitter his heart. He felt that he did not possess qualifications and accomplishments which could give them pleasure. He knew nothing of the art of charming society, or being the leader of a fashionable clique. In fact, he knew that he was unequal to the task of playing the agreeable to a fine lady for a single hour; the idea appalled him. Conscious of all these startling defects, the demon of *mauvaise honte* sat like Sinbad's old man of the sea on his shoulder, whenever, obeying his mother's behest, he presented himself among her guests; and there it gibed and twitted him so unmercifully, that he generally perpetrated the most

extravagantly awkward things, at the remembrance of which his cheeks and ears would tingle for months afterwards. It was not his vocation to be a trifler—a polished, bright-winged moth, fluttering in the cold, luminous cheatery of fashion. He was born for higher aims. His flight was to be that of the young eaglet, towards the sun. He felt that men were created for noble destinies, and the idea filled his mind with sublime imaginings. The boy had become a man; stalwart in frame; with fine, piercing gray eyes, and a broad, expansive brow, over which clustered a wreath of black, curling hair, which defied all skill in its arrangement. His mouth was firm set, and, when his face was at rest, imparted to his countenance a stern and haughty expression; but a smile, a gentle, happy thought, illuminated it like a burst of sunshine on a massive face of stone. He was engaged in a business which suited him. He was junior partner in one of the wealthiest shipping firms in the United States. This firm was proprietor of an extensive steam-machine manufactory, which, in connection with its enterprising affairs, was a most important aid. In this branch of the concern the junior partner felt the most intense interest, and had already made such improvements in the art of moulding and casting, as not only lessened labor, but rapidly increased their wealth. Generous, unselfish, and filled with a pure, innate love for the beautiful, Harry De Vere was not the slave of Moloch or of Mammon. As the merciless iron and its throbbing heart of steam hissed and bellowed around him, filling the air with palpitation, and scorching the life-pregnant winds that passed by it, and the wave of fortune rolled in its golden sand to his coffers, he saw many a sweet vision through the wreathing vapors, and heard wild, musical chants amidst roaring furnaces and clinking hammers; dreams and harmonies whose realization depended on the success of certain mechanical principles which he had applied experimentally to steam. His great, beneficent heart never rested, and never tired. When his scientific and business labors were over for the day, his energies were applied to the improvement of the condition of artisans of all classes. He founded a library for the exclusive use of workmen, and a night school, where their apprentices could learn the rudiments of a substantial education without cost, instead of wasting the nights in disgraceful brawls or licentious idleness. He did not rest here. A permanent fund was established, by handsome annual subscriptions, for the use of maimed and disabled workmen, and their helpless widows and children. He was the motive power of all this good. He gave munificently from his own ample means, and invited, successfully, others to share with him in the luxury of substantially aiding his

fellow-men, and strengthening the pillars of the republic, by making good citizens of those who, left to the chance of circumstances, would disgrace and weaken it by their crimes. But he was little seen or known in it all, except as the friend of such as needed prompt relief, and applied to him.

He associated much with men. The glimpses of life he had seen in his mother's elegant drawing-rooms inspired him with no disposition to seek an alliance with the world, as a certain class, who consider themselves privileged, are from courtesy called. He had seen and felt too long the evil results of the thing at home, where the higher duties of nature were disregarded, and coldness and want of that loving confidence which so brightens up the roof-tree, reigned despotically; and so he shrunk farther and farther off, still clinging with the affection of yore to the one heart which had sheltered him from utter negligence, and taken him lovingly into its very core, until they were both half forgotten. But he was happy. In the noble pursuit of science, in the divine office of comforter of the poor, in the charms of literature, and the society of his proud old father, this rebel to fashion and its brilliant, monstrous cheateries dared—ay, dared to be happy.

In the drawing-room of her showy mansion in Chiswicke Square, Mrs. De Vere, arrayed in a rich green watered silk, and crimson velvet headdress, was moving anxiously about, with a preoccupied air, and a small feather dusting-brush in her hand, which she passed nervously over the little china monsters, gilded *bagatelles*, vases, and Parisian elegances which covered her tables and *consols*. Her face was full, and too much disposed to redden up on the slightest occasion; and her embonpoint figure, fitted by the most artistic French dress-maker in the city, *would* reveal ungraceful proportions, notwithstanding the handsome arrangement of the rich materials in which it might be clad, or the infinite pains and labor that were taken to conceal them.

"Did you send for me?" said honest John De Vere, entering the spacious apartment with a nervous, dissatisfied air.

"Yes! yes, De Vere—do sit down one moment; I have something of importance to say to you." He sat down.

"You know, my love," she continued, sinking into the cushioned abyss of a *fauteuil*, "that, occupying the position we do in the world, it is very incumbent on us to lead off, this season, with a splendid entertainment——" Mr. De Vere growled. "And I have not teased you about it before, my dear, although the Wights and Russells are trying their best to take the precedence, because I perceived you were so occupied with Harry's affairs as to have no time for anything else. The girls, you know, Elizabeth and

Alice, must have certain advantages. They are thought elegant, and are certainly of high fashion, and the world expects something extraordinary from us on their account. Elizabeth is decidedly a belle———"

"Has she ever knit a stocking?"

"You quite shock me, my love; but to go on—Alice is much admired."

"Has she ever made a shirt?"

"My dear Mr. De Vere, how excessively facetious you are, this morning! The bare mention of such a thing would kill Alice."

"The more's the pity, Peggy; but go on, I'm in a hurry."

"I have frequently requested you, Mr. De Vere," exclaimed the lady, reddening, and fanning herself furiously with the plumed duster, "I have frequently requested you to cease calling me by that low, vulgar name; call me Marguerite, or Mrs. De Vere, but never by that abominable—Peggy, indeed!" There was an agitating pause.

"I have an engagement at twelve o'clock," said Mr. De Vere, quietly, after consulting his watch; "it wants now precisely ten minutes of the time."

"Very well, Mr. De Vere, I will not detain you five. I wish you to give me a check for the expenses of my contemplated entertainment," replied the lady, with an endeavor to look *nonchalant*, but crushing the brightly-dyed Indian feathers in her hand until every one was broken.

"What will these expenses be, madam?" he inquired.

"Not a *very* large sum, my dear; I suppose four thousand dollars."

"And pray, madam, will you please to inform me what infernal extravagance you are going at, that will cost four thousand dollars?"

"No *extravagance*, my love; not a superfluous expense; you know that our position demands generous outlays, at least. The greenhouse flowers alone will cost one thousand; then I want to purchase some new French ornaments, and the dearest love of a gold centre-piece for the table, for fruit; then there is a partition to be taken down and a real stage erected for *tableaux*, and new draperies; and some forced strawberries, which Kirkland has ripening in his hotbeds; these I must have, dear! And the supper, the wines, and Bucher's confectionery. Lord, Mr. De Vere, I cannot remember one half the things; I only fear four thousand will *not* do, but I'll try and manage the thing. But give me the check; I can then make my calculations better," said Mrs. De Vere,

gaining courage from his silence. But it was the pause which precedes the falling of the thunderbolt.

"I won't. By rats, I won't. Not that; I can't afford it, Mrs. Divers; but old John Divers has been made a fool of long enough by such senseless extravagance," he said, rising to his feet, and clasping his hands behind him. "What obligation am I under, woman, to give feeds that cost four thousand dollars to people that would whistle us down the tide to-morrow? I'm getting old, Mrs. Divers; I am old, madam; and, before my books are posted up, and my accounts balanced, madam, in the other world, I intend, instead of greasing fat pigs any longer, with God's help, to hunt up poor ones, and put food in the mouths of the starving, and fuel on the hearth of the freezing. One thousand dollars for greenhouse plants! The devil!"

Mrs. De Vere could not stop him. Whenever he called her Mrs. Divers, she knew it was useless to attempt to say one word; and she sat down to rest; not baffled, but to gather new strength for another onset. Her perfect silence, and the tears he saw gathering in her eyes, calmed him; his aspect of fury passed away, and his face resumed its wonted look of subdued and troubled feeling. She was quick to observe it, and made her move accordingly; she knew she would *checkmate* him, at last; she had a thousand times before, and why not now?

"My dear De Vere," she began, in a deprecating tone, "you are very unkind to-day; surely, you do not mean to give me a peremptory refusal in this small matter. I admit, my love, that it sounds extravagant; but we must keep up our dignity. Frederick *must* invite the judges and his associates in the law; then there's the English ambassador and suite, who were all so kind to Frederick in London; we *must* have him, and General Beverly, and a few of your retired business friends. Why, bless me! this is but the heading of the list of distinguished people I mean to have; and it will *never* do for them to go away from the house of the rich old merchant, De Vere, without being entertained in a princely way; will it, Harry? Come in; I am just consulting with your father about a certain ball I wish to give, in a few weeks, to our friends; but he is, for the first time in his life, in a parsimonious mood, and refuses me a few thousands; absolutely refuses me this small indulgence, Harry."

"I am very sorry, madam," he said, smiling, "that my father cannot oblige you; but if you will accept of a portion of it from me, I will advance it with pleasure. I have some idle money on hand now."

"You are a good boy, Harry, but I did not know you were so

rich. However, with your help, we can make out handsomely! Mr. De Vere, how much will you give? for this ball must and *shall* take place!"

"Harry, my boy, keep your money; keep your money for better uses. Like an old bull with a ring in his nose, I have been led these many years, in spite of myself. It's too late now, too late. I may as well give in; it's quite too late now for the struggle that would unfetter me," said the old man with a sigh. Probably her kind manner to his favorite son influenced him somewhat. However, he said no more, but went to a table in the next room, on which Bessie's writing implements always stood, and wrote a check on his banker for the required sum, then handed it to her, saying: "There, Peggy, take it; waste what would make many an honest man happy, and get laughed at for your pains by fools." He settled his hat on his head, and locking his arm in his son's, they left the room together. The old merchant, with bitter waters stirring in his heart, and Harry with an indignant flash scintillating in his large eyes, and his lips sternly locked together, to keep imprisoned the eloquent reproof which, though well deserved by his selfish mother, it would have been, he well knew, a sin for him to utter, walked forth into the cold wintry air, without exchanging a word on the subject; but each assured, by old and intimate association, of what the other felt.

"There they go—a well-matched pair, who care for nothing but their own low tastes," muttered Mrs. De Vere, looking after them with a glance of inexpressible scorn. "I have triumphed, however, sooner than I expected," she said, with a low laugh of exultation.

The two young ladies now entered, both elegantly and expensively attired, for the reception of morning visitors. Alice, with a faint tint on her cheeks, and bearing about her as usual a fragrance from the sweet vale of Cashmere, sauntered towards a pile of cushions which were heaped up with luxurious negligence on a velvet sofa, standing in an arched and shaded recess, silently arranged the folds of her rich crimson shawl, and threw herself in a reclining attitude on them. Bessie opened the piano, and commenced practising a gay French air that her brother had brought her from Paris.

"Bessie," said Mrs. De Vere, who was still standing at the window, gazing attentively at an old-fashioned but stately mansion opposite, "those people over the way are receiving morning visitors, and if I am not much mistaken, there is the Livingston equipage—and there, it has just drawn up, the Goldsboro's, of Oak Hill."

"I can't imagine who they are. The proprietor, I heard, was an old and widowed recluse," said Bessie, joining her mother at the window. "You know, mamma, they got in, the week we spent in Washington; but they must be *somebodies*, or that proud aristocrat, Shirley, would not be there. But there, the Livingstons are coming over, and we will hear the mystery explained."

They were scarcely seated before the Livingstons were announced; and almost the first question, after the compliments of the day were exchanged, was, "Mrs. De Vere, have you called on Mrs. Willoughby?"

"No, really. Who are they? One never heard of them before," she replied.

"Yes?" interrogated Mrs. Livingston, making eyes which expressed all her wonder; "Mrs. Willoughby is one of our oldest families, and enormously rich. Her father was that Shirley, who was so famous, you know, towards the close of our Revolution, and one of the *Signers*. Her mother was the daughter of an earl or something in one of those English shires. At any rate, the whole world are making calls to-day."

"And her step-daughter will be the belle of the season, Bessie," put in Kate Livingston; "she's the handsomest creature I ever saw."

"Mrs. Willoughby has the reputation of being a *bas-bleu*, and pedantic," added another lady. "It is true she carries a high, proud look with her, and does not often smile, but her conversation is perfectly fascinating, and her manner indisputably elegant. She did not mention books once."

"And oh, Mrs. De Vere, you ought to see her drawing-rooms. They are models of the most exquisite taste—nothing upholsterish or smart-looking about them. Her pictures, draperies, furniture, musical instruments, and all, are arranged so as to give the rooms an expression—a something indescribable, which convinces a stranger at once that the head of the mansion possesses refinement, education, and taste," chimed in Kate Livingston, who delighted in tormenting Mrs. De Vere, whom she had always regarded as an interloper on the rights of aristocracy; the Livingstons priding themselves no little on old family and high descent.

"It is said she is at least forty years of age," remarked Mrs. Livingston; "but she does not look it by fifteen years. She'll make a sensation, depend on't."

Mrs. De Vere discovered at once, with her usual tact, that she had committed a great indiscretion in inquiring *who* the Willoughbys were, and reminding herself and everybody else that she was among the new people of the day. She hastened to

repair it immediately, by listening with the most complaisant smile and interested air to the information her guests heaped so unmercifully on her concerning them. "They are certainly an acquisition to her set; we wanted just such people in this neighborhood, to give it a tone," she thought; "people whose claims to the highest position in society everybody admits with alacrity. They will be most desirable acquaintances for *us*."

"They seem to make such a sensation already that it is perfectly fatiguing," drawled Alice, from her cushions.

"Alice is jealous, already, of Miss Willoughby! 'Pon honor, I'll submit patiently to being belle'd out by her this season, if she only succeeds in rousing Alice!" exclaimed Bessie De Vere, laughing.

"But, Bessie," observed Miss Livingston, ill naturedly, "Walter Shirley, the handsome Southern cavalier, it is already whispered, is her devoted slave. Mrs. Willoughby, you know, is Col. Shirley's sister, and it's very natural for them to wish to keep the fortune in the family."

"Well, if the flirtation promises a fatal climax to my hopes," she replied, merrily, "I must only get Fred, who, you all say, is irresistible, to step in and cause a diversion in my favor. I vow, I won't relinquish the handsomest beau in town, even to his relations."

"I am really rejoiced at their coming into Chiswicke Square," Mrs. De Vere at last got an opportunity of declaring; "they will enliven our circle delightfully. We must call to-morrow and secure them for our entertainment. I hope they will have no engagement ahead."

"Oh do, do, Mrs. De Vere, and try and get some other new faces. One gets heartily sick of seeing the same set everywhere; it is so very stupid. I yawned myself almost to death at Russell's, the other night," cried the highly bred Miss Livingston.

"Mrs. De Vere's arrangements will be of the most *recherché* kind, Kate; there will be no danger of your doing so rude a thing as a 'yawn,'" remarked her more politic mother. "But did you hear, Mrs. De Vere, about the Treshaws?"

"No; may I inquire if they have been making themselves ridiculous again?" asked Mrs. De Vere, settling herself on the cushions of her *fauteuil*.

"Perfectly so. They are buying up all the old silver and old china from all the old Jews in town, and showing off for family relics. We all know, though, precisely when and where they sprang up; and, as if this folly were not sufficient to annihilate them, young Tresham, handsome Bob, as the girls call him, has,

after infinite pains, found a crest belonging to an old English family of the same name, and had it emblazoned on the panels of his cab. Such people remind one of woodcocks, when they attempt to evade the keen eye of the sportsman by running their heads into a furze-bush, and leaving their bodies quite exposed," exclaimed Mrs. Livingston, laughing. "Do you visit them, Mrs. De Vere?"

"Certainly not, my dear Mrs. Livingston. They are quite the people of yesterday. One never hears of them unless they do something to make themselves ridiculous, which they contrive to do very often," said poor Mrs. De Vere, growing purple, yet bridling with dignity.

"By the by, it is quite the fashion now to crowd one's *consols* with odds and ends of old India china. Mrs. Leigh has an old cracked teapot and sugar-bowl. To be sure, they look an hundred, standing among the costly statuettes and rare ornaments in her drawing-room. I think I have some packed away in an old chest, that has not been opened for a century; I believe I must get it out. But bye-bye. Come, Kate, make your adieu; we've fifty calls to make this morning."

Ere they left the apartment, another bevy of fashionables entered, who talked of Mrs. Willoughby and Edith as delightful novelties, whose ample means would minister to their enjoyments, and give a greater brilliancy to the season. Now, Mrs. De Vere, with admirable tact, spoke of them as Mrs. Livingston had done a few minutes before; declared her intention of calling immediately; and had only been deterred from doing so before by the fear that they were not quite settled.

"You have heard, Mrs. De Vere, that the Lacys are ruined! No? Well, they are ruined irretrievably. Some say Mrs. Lacy's extravagance, and others that his own imprudence in speculating, and all that sort of thing that men do, is the cause of it. But I'm sure it's hard to say or judge. You know, Mrs. De Vere, as Christians, we should not judge others," said Miss Cicely Thorne, a small, wiry-looking little person, with keen, light-blue eyes, and thin, beaked nose. She was one of the lights of the day; high-toned in church matters; and, belonging to some twenty societies, charitable benevolent societies, was saved the expense of subscribing to a newspaper. She was also a sprig of fashion; which grace, it was averred, caused to blossom in good works like Aaron's rod—a gentlewoman somewhat reduced in circumstances, but managing, by dint of the most economical arrangements, to keep up, not only appearances, but her position in society. Concerning the wants of the poor she was an oracle, for everybody knew that she informed

herself practically on that point, by visiting them, and comforting them daily. That was one side of the story. And somehow, there was such an hallucination on the subject of Miss Thorne's piety and charity, that the most startling gossip or malicious news flowed with so great an unction from her lips as inspired every one with holy horror for the characters she chose to dissect for the benefit of mankind. She held, as an article of faith, that wickedness should be made an example of on all occasions; and acting on it, she spared none.

"I am not at all astonished, my dear Cicely. I always expected and predicted it. They gave the most elegant dinners in town," said Mrs. De Vere.

"It's a most shocking thing. I look on it as the just retribution of Heaven for their unfaithful stewardship. They never did and never would put their names on any of my charitable subscription lists. However, charity teaches us to view with merciful eyes the shortcomings of our fellow-creatures. Mrs. Lacy has opened a painting class, and, would you believe it? she is so devoid of sensibility that she laughs and chatters with as much volubility as she ever did. But it's all bravado, depend on't," observed the little woman, with a penetrating look.

"Bessie, we're to wear no sleeves at evening parties this winter, only a narrow frill or two of lace around the arm-hole, or swan's-down; and Madame le Roi says the corsage is to be worn extremely low. Isn't it delightful!" said a young creature, just fluttering into the glare of the world, who had a neck and arms that would have thrown Canova into ecstasies.

"It will be a very becoming fashion to you, Nannie; but woe betide us, whose arms and necks ought to be veiled!" replied Bessie, kissing her roseate lips.

"And, Bessie, the Seguins are in town. Did you know it?" she inquired, caressing Bessie's jewelled hand.

"Yes. We have already taken a box for the time of their engagement. But I shall only go to hear Norma, Maritana, and that queer thing, the Postillion of Lon—Lon something—Lonjemeau, I believe, or something very near it. Seguin makes such horrid faces in his buffo characters, that I am in convulsions of laughter all the time. I cannot bear anything tragic; but fine music induces me to endure even tragedy, I so dearly love music," replied Bessie.

"Operas are my detestation," again drawled Alice. "When the whole troupe yell out those choruses, it affects my nerves so dreadfully, I don't recover for weeks. I wish they had not come; for mamma and Bessie will drag me there, notwithstanding I take

no earthly pleasure in them, because it's the fashion. I wish there was no fashion; it's excessively troublesome." After making this stupendous effort, she fell back on her cushions, and relapsed into silence.

Walter Shirley now sauntered in, followed by Frederick De Vere, who, with a superb air of *nonchalant* condescension, bowed to the ladies, and, with high-bred *empressement*, devoted his attentions to a young married lady of dashing manners, who was of the *coterie*.

"We have not seen you for an age, Mr. Shirley," said Bessie, holding out her hand.

"I have been a victim to the most cruel circumstances you can conceive, Miss De Vere," he said, taking the small hand, and bowing over it with the air of a Paladin. "When you hear the story, you will acquit me of Vandalism in absenting myself so long from your charming society."

"You have certainly the appearance of a victim, just now; but *l'habit ne fait pas le moine*, and I can judge better whether you are worthy of forgiveness or not, when you explain what these truly unfortunate circumstances were that made you an absentee from our court," responded Bessie, laughing.

"Most fair and noble Portia! I have a father, who, being of some consequence in the political world, has chosen me for his trusty aid; and as a dutiful son, intent on the interests of his sire, I have been driven to and from the seat of government some ten times, with the velocity of a bird between two battledoors. Then, to make open confession, I have been paying assiduous court to my very handsome aunt, the lady of Woodreve Manor; and, like a paragon of disinterestedness as I am, doing the agreeable to her step-daughter, who is a perfect Nourmahal. And all from a stern sense of duty."

"You are unconditionally forgiven," she laughingly replied.

"Thank you, lady. These were difficulties which required the patience of Fabricius. I have not lived on roses since we last met; and not the least of my trials was the fact of having been exiled so long from—my friends, especially Miss De Vere," he continued, in the same mock-heroic tone. After paying a due number of compliments to the languid Alice, and indulging in another ten minutes' *persiflage* with Bessie, which she carried on with spirit, he bowed himself out, and, the other guests making their *adieux*, at the same moment the family were left alone.

"Are we to have the ball, *mon cher mère?*" inquired young De Vere.

"Certainly, Frederick; and I wish you to make some sugges-

tions about the arrangements while we are at dinner. I intend it shall be a grand affair, I assure you."

"It will ruin my *goût*, my digestion, to talk about it at dinner," he remarked.

"Try it," said Mrs. De Vere, curtly. "*I* have no other time. It is now after three, and I must go, immediately after dinner, to see about getting linen made up for the girls. Cicely Thorne told me to-day of a woman that works cheap, and the creature lives somewhere at the world's end, on the outskirts of the city. Then I have to see Kirkland about those strawberries. I'm sure he'll charge me one hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars for them; but I'm determined to have them at any price."

"*Mon chère* madame, *vous parlez* with such extreme *velocité* that I am *déconcerté*—'pon honor I am," said the exquisite, sinking with a fatigued air on a sofa.

"Look here, Frederick De Vere," cried his mother, turning towards him with flashing eyes, "when you talk to me, drop all that foreign lingo. I don't understand it." She pulled the bellrope violently, and, when a footman appeared, issued orders of "not at home" for the remainder of the day. "And I must say, sir," she continued to her son, "I think it very rude of you."

"Ah! then, *chère*—dear—*mère;* ah, *pardonnez moi*, mamma, just satisfy my mind on one point," he pleaded.

"Go on." Elizabeth laughed. "Go on. I'm in a perfect fluster. I have, I repeat, a thousand things to do this afternoon."

"Honor me, madame, by enlightening me as to whether or not your *cuisinier*—ah, cook, made me, according to directions, a potage *à la Français*, and a *salmi*, to-day? otherwise, I shall be compelled to dine at a *table d'hôte*," he said, twirling his *moustache.*

"Come and see," said Mrs. De Vere, as she swept from their presence, and led the way to the dining-room.

"Frederick, your affection is sublime," said Bessie, seizing his white jewelled hands, and pulling him up from the cushions on which he lounged. "If you don't take care, mamma will stop your supplies. Come to dinner. Come, Alice. I declare, I believe you think eating such a fatiguing process that you'd avoid it if you could."

"I do," replied Alice, as she slowly followed them.

The subject that Mrs. De Vere wished particularly to consult her son about was certain arrangements respecting a set of *tableaux vivants*, or *charades*, which she had in contemplation for her *fête;* but nothing was definitely decided on, except that they

were to be; and now that they were thought of, it was considered indispensable to the *éclat* of the occasion to have them; for Frederick was so enchanted with the cook's first attempt at a *salmi de mouton*, that he gave the most unsatisfactory answers to the thousand questions she asked him concerning the necessary details of the subject; so, in a huff, she bustled out of the room, leaving him in an ecstatic state over some *vin de blanche* that he had brought with him from *la belle France*.

CHAPTER VI.

THE POOR RICH WOMAN.

WRAPPED in costly velvets and furs, Mrs. De Vere entered her luxurious coach, to roll away and seek out, among the distant haunts of the poor, the persons she intended to bestow employment on. They who are clad in purple and fine linen daily; who have but to rub the lamps of their fancies, and its slaves appear to do their bidding; whose inner lives look forth through rose-colored, gold-tinted mists, know but little of the stern truths of humanity; much less do they know of the sweet blossoms of consolation which open their heavenly dyes amidst its thorns, which it is *their* privilege to gather for ETERNITY, and whose balm would shed rich odors around the chilly mould of their silent graves. They can scarcely comprehend the immense magnitude of the boon that gives the poor man "leave to toil;" and when they issue their mandates to the human machine, whose labor is to accomplish the task ministering to selfish pleasures, no account is taken of the aching brains and starving bodies, the remunerating pittance-comforts of the desolate, patient hearts which are kept from breaking by the poor crust it brings them.

Ashamed to beg, the honest stricken poor wither and pine beneath their silent agonies, until the DELIVERER comes in the shape of work! Then how feverishly brightens the sunken eye; how Hope kindles up her glimmering star in the ruinous abode; how softly closes the strained and tear-swollen lids in slumber that will unseal for them a busy and happy morrow. Then the first golden streaks of dawn steal in to the music of words of cheer; the hearthstone, yesterday so dark and cold, grows ruddy with

light and warmth; and while long, thin fingers ply their task, and the hammer clinks its roundelay, food, substantial, nourishing food, sends throughout the dwelling its incense of comfort from wooden or earthen censers! Is this a figment of fancy? No! nor is it the result of grudging charities; nor is it the sickly work of sentimentality. What then? It is the genuine, healthy result of generously bestowed labor. Let those who have it amply in their power to aid the poor in this honest and worthy way look to the consequences if they fail to comply; and remember that the unequal distribution of riches is not without a sublime and divine object. Riches and poverty are but sent to try us; each ordeal is fearful, but poverty is the great REFINER, and both yield eternal fruits according to their applied uses. * * * * *

The fat, pampered coach-horses prance daintily along over the vulgar roughness of the precincts of the town. This western suburb is but sparsely settled. A few poor tenements grouped together, as if making a charitable effort to impart comfort to each other; desolate, wintry-looking fields, and a gray, leafless forest beyond; and two or three ill-clad, shivering creatures returning from their toils and struggles in the great mart of Mammon below, impart to Mrs. De Vere's nerves a painful sensation, which caused her to shudder involuntarily, then jerk the check-string violently. A footman appeared at the window; at the same moment the coachman drew up his horses, and stood waiting her command. "I shall go no further," she said; "the place looks like one might be robbed in the broad daylight. Miss Thorne must be insane, to direct me to so miserably poor a neighborhood."

"Yes, ma'am," replied the polite footman, bowing.

"I will wait here, Mansfield, in the coach, and do you go and inquire among some of these people for a Mrs. Hewlett, who takes in plain sewing."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Mansfield, touching his gold-laced hat, and setting off *instanter* on his exploring expedition. "If it wasn't for the expenses of this entertainment," soliloquized Mrs. De Vere, leaning back on her damask cushion, "I would not, for the world, have taken this trouble; but I *must* economize, and then, Miss Thorne says, it will be doing a charitable act to give this Hewlett employment. There! he's found her, I suppose; he's hurrying back. What news, Mansfield?"

"The poor person what takes in work, ma'am, do live in that house to the left," he replied, throwing open the carriage-door with a magnificent flourish, and holding out his gloved hand to assist her to the ground.

A loud rap on the crazy door of the comfortless-looking dwell-

ing was answered by an old man, much deformed by rheumatic complaints, who leaned heavily on the staff that supported his feeble steps, and whose eyes, bleared by suffering as well as age, peered through the white elf-locks that hung over them, with a wondering look of inquiry. To the lady's query, "whether a poor woman named Hewlett lived there?" he mumbled out an affirmative, while the effort of speaking to strangers brought on a palsied shaking of the head, and directed her, by a sign, to the door at the head of the narrow stairs. There was something in that poor old wizened face—she knew not what—but a palpable flitting something that roughened up the waves of memory in that proud woman's heart, as if a demon's spell had passed over; it was indistinct, but sudden and fearful as the first wild awakening from the suffocation of a nightmare. And while she stood leaning, as if to rest, on the banister ere she ascended to the apartment of the seamstress, a troop of half-clad, noisy children, attracted by the appearance of so fine a coach and such grand outriders in their lonesome quarter, swarmed with fantastic gestures of delight around it, and from windows and doors were thrust pale, wondering faces, to gaze at the brave show, and wonder. The simple fools! as if those whose riches enabled them to purchase such luxuries were exempt from suffering. She was glad to get in from it all. The whole scene was offensive to her in the extreme. Independent of the wizard spell he had conjured up in her almost seared heart, he brought the truth too palpably to her conscience that a Lazarus was at her gates, who would thankfully receive the crumbs that fell from her table while she fared sumptuously. He was a silent, but harsh reproach to the vanities of life, with his pinched, want-stricken features and claw-like hands, bending and drooping with the world of poverty, disease, and want—a second Atlas—on his shoulders.

Mrs. De Vere gave an impatient rap on the door she was directed to. In a moment it was opened by a middle-aged woman, neatly but poorly clad, who courtesied respectfully, and invited her in; then dusting a chair with her apron, set it near the grate, where a few coals smouldered, and, with untaught but inbred politeness, asked her strange visitor to be seated.

"Is your name Hewlett?" inquired the lady, seating herself with an ungracious air.

"That is my name, ma'am," she replied, in a gentle tone of voice.

"You take in sewing, I believe?"

"That is my occupation, lady!"

"I was directed here by one of the ladies of the benevolent

society, who told me you worked cheap; and a world of trouble I've had to find you, you live in such an out of the way place."

"I hope my charges will not displease you, lady. I am always thankful to get a good job, and strain every nerve to give satisfaction," replied Mrs. Hewlett, while a round, defined spot of crimson burned on each cheek. "I will be happy, ma'am, to receive your orders."

"Well! you are a civil kind of a person; but you are very poor, are you not? I do not see a single comfort you have about you; and there are such strange-looking persons swarming in the neighborhood, that—that it might not be altogether safe to leave costly materials here—" observed the lady.

"Oh, lady!" exclaimed the poor woman, crimsoning over at the coarse insinuation, "we *are* all of us very needy, but would rather starve than do a dishonest act. I have had hundreds of dollars worth in this mean room, when my old father and I have been perishing with cold and hunger; but every shred was held sacred. We fear GOD, lady—we try to recollect always his Almighty presence in the midst of our trials, and the thought keeps us from temptation."

"Oh, I only referred to the people around you, my good woman, not yourself; you misunderstand me. I haven't a doubt of your honesty! I have two pieces of very fine linen to be made up for my daughters, and each article is to be finely stitched and handsomely ruffled with thread cambric, edged with lace. This is an excellent job for you, and if we can agree about the price, you shall make them. What would you charge, pray?" inquired Mrs. De Vere.

"I will be thankful for the work, lady; but do not think I could make such articles of apparel as you wish for less than one dollar a piece. It will take me, with close sewing, day and night, two whole days to make one."

"Two whole days to make one chemise!" ejaculated Mrs. De Vere. "Preposterous! you must work very slow, mistress Hewlett, allow me to say."

"Only consider, ma'am, the long seams that are to be stitched up and felled—the bands also to be stitched still finer, and corded—the close hemming—the gathers—then the ruffling for each, not only to be hemmed, but the edging whipped on. Indeed—indeed, two days and a half would not be long for so many thousand stitches—"

"I will not give one centime over seventy-five cents, and that is an extravagant price. If you choose to take the work on those

terms, you can have it; if not, there are hundreds who will be glad to do it for even less."

"God help them in their need, then," murmured the woman, folding her hands together. "Consider, lady, seventy-five cents is very little for the expenses of two days! fuel, provisions, lights, and house-rent, all to pay for. But I am out of employment just now, and will be very thankful for this work, if you will agree to pay me the sum mentioned."

"I wish to Heaven I had time to do it myself—from my heart I do. Your class want so many favors, when one would befriend them by giving them employment, that it's enough to make one's heart sick—" cried Mrs. De Vere, quite vexed.

"I do not ask favors, lady, only a fair recompense for my toil," said the woman in a quiet, sad tone. "I have my old father to support, and he has so many necessary wants in his age, which I would sacrifice my own comfort at any time to obtain for him!"

Here the old man tottered feebly in, and Mrs. Hewlett ran forward to assist him to his rush-bottomed arm-chair, that stood on the side of the room where the sun shone in all the afternoon; then lifted his hat tenderly from his head, and smoothed back his white hair.

"I've been to look for little Maggie again—I shall find her to-morrow, Rachel—to-morrow, I say, I shall find poor little bright-eyed Magg—won't I, child?" he asked, in a sharp, quivering voice.

"Oh yes, dear father, you shall find our Maggie; I will help you look for her," she said, soothingly.

"You will? There's a good Rachel; I've been looking these many, many years for her; but we'll find her, Rach, won't we?"

"We'll find the stray lamb, dear father; certainly we will. Be quiet now, and rest yourself," she said, tenderly. He leaned back his head and said no more, but clasped his long, thin fingers together, and, from the expression of his countenance, seemed to be indulging in dreams of bygone and happier days.

"He's a little childish, lady; I have to coax him, and humor him so much. Many, many years ago, as he says, my youngest sister, five or six years of age, got lost. We never found her; but she was his darling, and her memory seems to grow on him so. He goes out every day expecting to find her," said Mrs. Hewlett, sadly.

"It's dreadful. But it is getting late, Mrs. Hewlett, and I must go. You say you're out of work; what, then, is the use of haggling about a few cents? I will send the linen and other things to you, and you must positively make it up at my own price, and, if the work suits me, I'll speak to my friends about you, and

you'll be kept in employment all the winter," said Mrs. De Vere, rising, and turning her back towards the old man.

The poor seamstress reflected a moment, looked at her unconscious parent, so dependent on her exertions for life; then, with a saddened countenance and long-drawn sigh, yielded to the extortion.

If Mrs. De Vere had seen a man in the literal act of holding down the face of a poor want-stricken wretch to a great burr-wheel, while another effected the most violent and rapid evolutions, sharpening down his visage to the marrow of his bones, she would have understood that it was a process which ground the face of the poor; but if any one had hinted to her that she, Mrs. De Vere, was practically carrying out the same idea, she would have felt indignant and insulted.

"Very well. I will send the patterns and materials to you to-morrow by my footman, and you will please give him a receipt for them. I'll pay for the things as they are sent home," said the opulent lady.

"Yes, lady. May I ask your name?"

"Oh yes. I entirely forgot. My name is De Vere. I live in Chiswicke Square," she replied, pausing an instant.

"Can you stop one moment, Mrs. De Vere?" said Mrs. Hewlett, earnestly. "There is a poor youth in yonder room dying by inches for want of proper nourishment. He cannot speak much English, and I think is a painter; he takes likenesses, and has some beautiful pictures he would be glad to sell. I know, lady, you couldn't help pitying him if you would only see him, he is so gentle and beautiful."

How eloquently she could plead for another—how fluently she besought that aid for a fellow-sufferer which she could not have found language to ask for herself!

"Lord, no! My good woman, I am so afraid of contagion—I can't talk French, and you can't conceive what a hurry I'm in. Give him this," said Mrs. De Vere, handing her a small piece of silver. "May-be I'll send one of my sons out to see him; *they parley voo*, both of them."

And she entered her elegant coach; and, in the pride and thoughtlessness of riches, attended by pampered menials, and leaning on soft cushions, she left honest poverty, modest want, and their gaunt, haunting spectres far behind her.

"To Kirkland's," had been her order to the coachman, and to Kirkland's she was borne by the obedient horses.

Mr. Kirkland was rather a slow man. He deliberated about everything, and performed everything deliberately, and yet it was

astonishing what immense success he always had in hastening a premature bloom of rare flowers, and forcing an unnatural ripening of unseasonable fruits. He was a dapper-looking person, with a bald head, fresh cheeks, and a nose that turned up at its extremity most unceremoniously, as if for the express object of supporting a pair of large horn spectacles, that gave to his aspect a look of "wisdom supernal."

"Madam," he said, as he stood on the curb-stone, beside the carriage window, with his hands thrust into the pockets of his green velveteen small-clothes, "Madam!"

"I understood, a few days ago, Mr. Kirkland, that you had some fine hautboys ripening," said Mrs. De Vere, leaning out, and speaking blandly.

"I believe I have, madam; indeed, I may say I *have* some very fine ones," he replied, bowing.

"How many, Mr. Kirkland?" she asked, very anxiously.

"Well, madam, I have calculated that point very carefully some two or three times, and think I may safely count on twenty quarts and a few over!" he replied, slowly.

"When will they be quite ripe, ready for gathering?"

"I have reason to hope they will be quite ripe in the course of three weeks, madam."

"And what will you charge for them—the whole twenty quarts, Mr. Kirkland? I have my own reasons for wishing to know precisely," said Mrs. De Vere, with an important air.

Mr. Kirkland looked down, as if he was working out a problem in the diameter of the coach-wheel nearest him—then hummed in his throat a strange little air, which he had the honor and glory of composing for the purpose of helping himself out of perplexing dilemmas like the present. Mrs. De Vere waited impatiently, and waited long.

"Do you wish to purchase the hautboys, madam?" he inquired, at last.

"Yes, I do. That is, provided you are not too extravagant in the price," she replied, drawing herself proudly up, and enjoying the consciousness of the power to procure them at any price.

"Madam, you are the twentieth person who has been after them same remarkable hautboys to-day," said Mr. Kirkland, chuckling to himself.

"My dear Kirkland, you are to give ME the refusal of them—name your own price; I am determined to have them," cried Mrs. De Vere, in a tone of alarm.

"It's a very uncommon thing, strawberries here in November; very uncommon. I've had hotbeds twenty years and more, and

never could, with my best endeavors, get on with them before; and now I may say, though perhaps it's not overly modest, that they are the very finest I ever see, at any season."

"What will you take for them? Do tell me, there's a good soul," cried Mrs. De Vere, in an ecstasy of alarm at the idea of not securing them.

"A hundred and fifty dollars, madam, is the very lowest," he answered, after another cogitation between his thoughts and the wheel.

"*I will give it.* Don't let any one even see them after this, Kirkland. And besides the strawberries, I shall want every japonica, rose, oleander, and everything in the shape of a flower that your greenhouse contains. So don't cut another until your hautboys are ripe," said the lady, with a grand air.

"I must have to-night to think on't, Madam De Vere. It's a very large order, madam, very large. It might interfere with my other customers; affront some of them, madam, to allow the monopoly. Will you please drive out to-morrow? and I can give you something like a definite answer, madam."

"How very tiresome!" exclaimed the lady, vexed at his unconcerned manner; "I'll be here precisely at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning; surely, Kirkland, you can promise me that you'll give nobody an answer until then about the hautboys?"

"The madam shall be gratified on that point. At eleven o'clock, precisely, to-morrow, A. M., the question shall be settled definitely," he replied, bowing as the coach rolled away towards Chiswicke Square.

And the poor seamstress! Oh world, thou art a hard taskmaster. And the dying foreigner!! Fold your wings of cloud, Genius of life, and weep over man's inconsistency!!!

CHAPTER VII.

"Such is fair Virtue, o'er the wide earth beaming;
Her sacred light of love forever streaming;
From land to land, the heavenly spirit flies.
Bids grace and beauty shine with deeper glow,
And o'er the common paths of life below
Sheds down a hallowed glory from the skies."

JERROLD'S *Mag.*

"AT home, ladies?" inquired Mr. Bedford, in a gay tone, as he entered the drawing-room in Chiswicke Square, where Mrs. Willoughby was deeply engaged in the perusal of a new work, just issued by a favorite author; and our Edith of Woodreve sat embroidering roses and blossoms on a square of purple velvet, which was destined for an ottoman cover, while she sang in a low, mellow tone, one of the sweet airs from *La Sonnambula*. It was some time before the fashionable visiting hour, and the day preceding Mrs. De Vere's *fête*, about which the upper circles were in a perfect *furor* of delighted anticipation.

"Always, and at all hours at home to you, dear old friend," said Mrs. Willoughby, closing her book as she arose to meet him. Edith threw aside her embroidery, and welcomed him with an affectionate kiss, then wheeled a cushioned arm-chair round to the fire, and would have relieved him of a large package he held tenaciously in his hand; but he smiled, and told her, with a provoking air, "that it contained a secret, and he did not care to relinquish it, for fear her curiosity might lead her into temptation."

"You do very right; I have the strangest *penchant* on earth for opening bundles and packages," she replied, laughing, as she threw herself half kneeling on a *tabouret* at his feet; "and, if this is not some private affair of mamma's, I intend to remain just where I am until the mystery is solved; for I cannot recollect ever to have seen Mr. Bedford with so ominous a parcel before."

"A little patience, Etha," he replied, fondly patting her beautiful cheek; "you are to promise me something which I shall presently ask you, as a condition to your obtaining a view of the concealed treasure in my package; promise on honor to grant my boon, and I unfasten the wrappings at once."

"Name your condition—demand the boon; for, as I am a fair

ladye, I am prepared to make great sacrifices to the tutelar genius of my sex," she said, laughing.

"So—now listen, Etha; I hear that you have been elected, by acclamation, the belle of the season. Go where I will, I hear a ceaseless chant in honor of your beauty. You *are* beautiful, child. Your manners are landed as elegant, and your accomplishments, wit, and style pronounced brilliant and faultless. Now, Etha, it requires no necromancer's skill to assure me how dangerous will be the incense, how Circean the spell of the world's fascinations to a spirit like yours. It would grieve us much, Miriam, to see her changed into a cold, heartless trifler; would it not, Miriam?" said the old man, sadly.

"There is no evil I would more deeply deplore for Edith," replied Mrs. Willoughby, regarding her lovely step-daughter with a fond and anxious expression.

"And," continued Mr. Bedford, folding both her hands in his as she still knelt at his feet, gazing up into his face, with wonder and alarm shadowing her countenance, "and to lose the power of discriminating between true friendship, and that false sentiment which only fortunate and adventitious circumstances in one's position inspire the giddy flutterers of the world in one's regard; to become so charmed with flattery as to prefer the indiscriminate applause of mere parasites to the heartfelt approval of a chosen few; to see our lovely wild flower of Woodreve transformed into a flaunting blossom, destitute of its soft, modest bloom, and witching fragrance."

"Dear—dear Mr. Bedford—dear mamma, what have I done?" exclaimed Edith, while her eyes filled with tears, and she turned her flushed face appealingly from one to the other. "Surely, I have exhibited no sign that the world will thus contaminate me, and turn away from their native channels the best feelings of my nature. Indeed, sir, you alarm and distress me."

"No, Etha—no, darling, not yet; the poison insinuates itself slowly and surely. Trust the world too much, Etha, worship too fondly its pleasures, and the bitter change must come," said Mr. Bedford, his hands on each side of her head, and kissing her polished forehead. "But, I warn you, come what may, *I* will not be supplanted in your affections. Promise me this—"

"How could that be possible—how could I forget the love of long years? Oh, Mr. Bedford—mamma—if I thought these pleasures you have so kindly indulged me in, and which I have so truly enjoyed, would leave behind them such deplorable results; would make me so like that fruit which grows on the borders of the Dead Sea, I would beg permission to fly to some deep solitude,

where not an echo of the world could reach me," exclaimed Edith, with genuine feeling.

"Softly, Etha; softly, child," said Mr. Bedford. "Shall a mariner neglect the duties of his vocation, because buoys and flaming beacons are erected above the shoals and reefs, past which he had often recklessly cruised, ere he knew the perils of the way? No, child, instead of flying from the world, be warned of the dangers that threaten, and learn to perform well and wisely its social duties. That politeness founded on principles of good nature and unselfishness needs no hypocrisy or extrinsic aid to sustain it; it is always self possessed, thoughtful, and graced by the lustre of that golden rule which teaches us to do unto others as we would they should do unto us. But don't quarrel with the world; only avoid evils you cannot control, and acquire none of its conventional affectations, and you will get on. It would be a pity to mar the work of nature in this warm little heart, Etha. But I will postpone the conclusion of my lecture until I see the first symptoms of transformation."

"Has life, then, no true enjoyments? Are they all like a dream, fleeting as bright—sweet, but poisoned?" said Edith, despondingly, while tears rolled over her cheeks.

"Pish, child; that is all sentimentality, mere wordy sentimentality. Look up, thou neophyte, and learn that fountains of genuine happiness spring forth, even from the desolate rocks of the world," said Mr. Bedford, cheerfully, as he uncovered his package, and held up to the light an exquisitely painted landscape, representing a scene near Soleure, and a group of peasants, in their picturesque costumes, laying their votive offering on the shrine of St. Veronè, which was overhung by grand old trees, and overshadowed by the sides of the chasm in which it was nestled. A golden light streaming down amidst the leaves, and gilding the rough edges of the rocks, threw out the shadows in bold, fine contrast, and imparted to the whole scene a rich, luminous tone. There was a breadth, a harmony, and touch in the picture that attracted Mrs. Willoughby's attention on the instant, and, as she came near enough to examine its details, she recognized one of the half-forgotten spots, where, by some mysterious influence or sympathy, her heart seemed to rest a moment from its agony, during her troubled tour through Europe in search of her son.

"Where did you find this, Mr. Bedford? It is a perfect gem, and the artist has been true to nature. Well do I remember my feelings, when I once visited this spot, at the close of a soft, sweet summer eve. Only the mountain-tops were gilded with the lingering daybeams, leaving the deep, rocky vale in sombre shadow,

while, afar off through the foliage, which was dark and glittering with dew, gleamed a mass of light from the hermitage shrine of St. Veronè; an image, I thought then, of hope to all but me," said Mrs. Willoughby, sadly.

"Yes, it is a faithful delineation; but look at this," said Mr. Bedford; "here is a scene, by moonlight, on the Roman Campagna. Notice those shepherds grouped around a watch-fire, beneath the shelter of an aged cork-tree, watching their flocks, which are scattered around them, sleeping. And see, Etha, a little beyond, resting against the fragment of a broken aqueduct, that boyish form wrapped in a coarse cloak, which falls gracefully around him, and on whose face the firelight gleams, revealing fair hair, and features which tell he is not of Italia."

"Oh, beautiful!" exclaimed Edith, with a rapturous expression of countenance; "how fine the contrast between his Raphael-like head and the dark-haired, soft-eyed peasants! I would give any sum for such a picture."

Mrs. Willoughby, without expressing an opinion, carried it to the window, and gazed long and earnestly on the features of the boy; then, without speaking, returned it to Mr. Bedford, and resumed her seat; her cheek more blanched, and a shadow, more thoughtfully sad, on her brow.

"Do you not admire it, Miriam? It is a finer painting than the other," inquired Mr. Bedford, looking a little disappointed at her silence.

"They are both remarkable productions, and exhibit, in every touch, a masterly genius; but somehow, dear friend, they have caused sharp vibrations on the chord of memory. May I ask the name of the gifted artist who painted them?" she asked.

"Now we are coming to the point," said Mr. Bedford, rubbing his hands together. "I will tell you. The poor young artist whose pencil has made the canvass glow, and breathe into a beautiful semblance of nature and life, is at this moment wasted by want and exhaustion, and, unless I can find a purchaser for these pictures—he must die."

Edith clasped her hands together, and, springing up with a sudden impulse, ran out of the room, but returned in a few moments with her purse, which she thrust into Mr. Bedford's hands, exclaiming, "Let us go this instant; he may die."

"My dear Etha, what on earth am I to do with all this money?" asked Mr. Bedford, inspecting the gold through the strained silk meshes of the purse.

"Give them to the poor, dying artist—do, do, Mr. Bedford—

as the price of the pictures," she cried, with heightened color and sparkling eyes.

"As the price of the pictures, Etha?"

"Oh no, I did not mean that, precisely. I wish to *give* him the gold; it is not a great deal; he need know nothing of the donor. Then my dear mamma will *purchase* these; will you not, ma'am?" she asked, while every feature trembled with sensibility.

"What a wild enthusiast the creature is!" said Mr. Bodford, laughing, while he felt inclined to clasp her to his bosom. "But listen, Etha. A friend of mine, no matter who, found out this poor son of genius by accident, and brought me these pictures this morning, either to purchase myself, or dispose of to some of my opulent associates; he had two others which he intended adding to his own collection; and informed me that fifteen dollars a piece would exceed the most extravagant hopes of the destitute being to whom they belong. I cannot take more."

"And, dear child, you must learn to temper your admirable generosity with justice. Your feelings do honor to human nature; but reflect, Edith, it is an insult to offer *charity* where only a fair recompense for labor is demanded; and I do not wish to chill your kindly emotions; the world, or life's bitterness, may effect that too soon; or even restrain your generous impulses: but you must not forget the sober fact that your purse contains every penny of your quarterly income, and by prodigally stripping it of its contents, several poor tradespeople will be put to the greatest inconvenience by being obliged to wait for the amount of their bills. Purchase one of the pictures, dear; it will be performing a good act, and helping to rescue from the despair of penury one who may yet struggle upward to a high place on the steep of fame," said Mrs. Willoughby, in a kind, calm tone. "I will purchase the Campagna scene, if you do not prefer it."

"You are always right, mamma. I see plainly the sound sense of your arguments, and admit that abstract facts are indisputable. But oh, how much would I prefer acting on my first impulse! It is a beautiful thing, a divine, ecstatic feeling, to be conscious of the power of doing good to others. You called me a neophyte, Mr. Bedford. Have I found the meaning of your enigma?" inquired Edith, closing her purse with a reluctant air, after counting out three half eagles in his hand.

"Yes, Etha, you have discovered one of the untainted and joyful mysteries of RICHES. You have tasted one of the few rare drops it is capable of distilling. In plain language, child, the science of making friends of the 'mammon of unrighteousness' is, generally, rather vaguely estimated; but you seem to appreciate

and understand perfectly its first lessons. Cherish your noble sentiments. Never forget the art of feeling for others, and the very *wish* to do good to those who suffer will elevate and purify your soul. That poor fellow will feel richer than Crœsus this afternoon, when he receives sixty dollars. Then make yourself happy by the reflection that you have had a share in binding up a jaded and desolate heart—of diffusing peace and comfort, where only despair and penury existed," said Mr. Bedford, in a sublime tone.

All sadness disappeared from Edith's countenance, and it grew radiant with the thought: "May I often find these rare drops! they will sweeten the most bitter waters," she murmured. "Yon picture, its shaded valley, its gold-tipped rocks and foliage, its sacred hermitage, shall be a perpetual memento of this hour."

"Good-by, Etha! Had you been born in Lacedæmon, you could not exhibit a greater contempt for such sordid trash as gold. Most people cry over empty purses, and you rebelled openly because yours was too full, eh!" said Mr. Bedford, pinching her ear; "but I must be off. The deuce! I thought there was something! Miriam, do you remember a Miss Lyle, who used to be occasionally at the Holme, a handsome, poetical, sprightly creature?"

"Perfectly. Her mother was an Italian, and from her she inherited a poetical taste that made her no mean *improvisatrice*. What of her?"

"She afterwards married Charles Lacy, a wealthy young merchant of our city, and they were the most admired and courted couple in the world, so long as—they gave good dinners. But Lacy, unfortunately, had more heart than judgment, and indorsed to a large amount for a man who was bankrupt at the time he asked him to put his name on his paper. The consequence was, they lost everything on earth except the house they now occupy, and *that*, fortunately, had been secured by her father's will to her children, so that nobody could lay a finger on it. She gave up everything—dower and all. She would do it. Now she teaches the art of painting, to one or two classes; and he obtains employment among his old friends, posting books and keeping accounts," said Mr. Bedford.

"Poor Caroline Lacy! I will call on her to-morrow," observed Mrs. Willoughby, with feeling.

"You are wasting your pity, I assure you. Caroline Lacy was probably never so happy as she is now. They have been cut by their former associates, but she values as they deserve those who merely worshipped the fortune and position they represented. And

she rises highly superior to changing and untoward circumstances; they have neither fettered nor enslaved her; but, like a robin chirping amidst the snows of winter, she is as blithe in adversity as she ever was in prosperity. A true heroine that, Edith, is she not?" inquired Mr. Bedford, turning towards her.

"She has a brave heart of her own," replied Edith. "I confess you have quite won my admiration for Mrs. Lacy. I long to see her."

"Her husband," continued Mr. Bedford, "does not bear the change so well; but I really believe he is more stung by the treachery of his former friend than the loss of his fortune. However, men have not such a superabundance of pliant philosophy as women. To be thrown suddenly from a high commercial position, and be in an hour deprived of affluence and reduced to absolute poverty, is enough to shake a man to the centre of his soul. You womenkind are always looking beyond the clouds at the rainbow. Men think more of the peltings of the storm and its thunderbolts than of the heroic or sentimental; they have stern realities and responsibilities to deal with. But my object is still unexplained. I think you would be setting a fine example to the fine folks around you, Miriam, to send Mrs. Lacy a season card for your reunions, and Lacy, too, of course. I'll see him; it will be necessary, in fact, for he's got so deuced proud since his troubles that one has to be on ceremony with him."

"You have but anticipated my intentions, my dear old friend. I always admired Miss Lyle; she was a bright-eyed, joyous creature; but Mrs. Lacy is an honor to her sex, and I shall be proud to number her among my friends," said Mrs. Willoughby, warmly.

"And show the graceless world," exclaimed Mr. Bedford, with a magnificent flourish of his hand, as he bowed himself out, "that there are a few true hearts left who can estimate intelligence, virtue, and worth a degree higher than gold."

As Mr. Bedford left the presence of the ladies, Walter Shirley entered, with his usual air of polished, high-bred elegance. His compliments were offered with tact, and clothed in the most felicitous language. To his aunt he brought that most touching and sublime of all prose epics, "Salathiel." It was just out, and glancing over its pages that morning at his bookseller's, he was struck with the lofty and beautiful passages his eyes fell on, and he purchased it, knowing that it would be a peculiarly acceptable offering to Mrs. Willoughby. Nor was he mistaken. The very first sentence she read touched the right chord of her singularly gifted mind, and in a few moments she was deeply engrossed by its thrilling incidents. To Edith, he presented a magnificent

bouquet of white japonicas, interspersed with heliotrope and half-opened roses, and leaning over her chair, murmured—

"I could think of nothing that would insure me a kinder welcome than these."

"Ah, you have discovered Edith's weak point, Walter. She is devoted to flowers," remarked Mrs. Willoughby, whose attention had been diverted from "Salathiel" by Edith's exclamation of pleasure.

"And these are so perfectly pure, so chaste, I cannot bear to think of their fading. Indeed, Mr. Shirley, you are very kind to bring me so rare a gift. They are like bright spots in the desert —I see so few since I left Woodreve. But such enjoyments ought to be occasionally rare, to be duly appreciated," she said, handing the bouquet to Mrs. Willoughby.

"There, take them, Edith; I perceive that you dread the profanation of another's touch for your fragrant earth-stars."

"Nay, mamma, your dear hand has but enhanced their value. Beautiful incense-breathing fairies, innocent darlings, angel flowers," exclaimed Edith; then, forgetting, in her passionate love for flowers, how the thing might be construed by Walter Shirley, she pressed them softly to her lips.

"Senseless, envied flowers," he murmured with a sigh; "I covet only one kind thought, while you lavish caresses on a thing which will ere the morrow fade."

Edith's brow crimsoned, until the broad, white leaves of the japonicas, over which she leaned, were tinged with a roseate hue, and without lifting her eyes to his, she replied in the same low tone: "It is ungenerous, Mr. Shirley, to envy the fleeting joys of so brief a life as theirs."

"I would not utter a reproach, if I could fancy, for a moment, they would remind Miss Willoughby of the giver, even while their freshness lasted; the thought even of so brief a memory would content me; but 'to-morrow the dream and the flowers will fade,' and he be forgotten."

"You estimate my friendship but lightly, Mr. Shirley; but pardon me, they are already drooping in the air of this heated apartment, and need moisture. I will get the most beautiful vase we have for them. Mamma, can you tell me where that long-necked, Bohemian glass is? Its delicate blue and silver tints will harmonize exactly with these rare pure flowers."

"May I implore my aunt to defer telling you of its whereabouts for one moment, Miss Willoughby? I will not detain you longer," said Walter Shirley, somewhat disconcerted by her noble simplicity. "I am the bearer of an important message from Mrs. De

Vere, which will require the gravest deliberation, and a council of three."

"Yes. Then spare a moment, Edith. What may this important embassy be, Walter?" said Mrs. Willoughby, smiling.

"Most grave and reverend ladies—as envoy extraordinary to the powers ruling at this court of Chiswicke Square, I must adhere faithfully to the instructions I have received," he replied, assuming a diplomatic air. "The arrangements of Mrs. De Vere's *tableaux vivants*, or charades, are not yet complete. She is literally dying for a Nourmahal, to make up the number of a very handsome set. Alice will do nothing but Medora, because she can lay on cushions all the time. Dora Livingston is to be Ginevra Orsini, because she fancies she is of the blood royal, and therefore understands how a feudal princess should act under trying circumstances. Bessie is to act Hinda; why, I can't exactly understand, unless she has heard that young Southerner, Stanley, admire the character. However, this is a bare inference from the fact that he has been cast for Hafed, the Gheber chief. And the end of it all is that Mrs. De Vere hopes these ruling powers now present will consider themselves knelt to, and prays most earnestly that, if Mrs. Willoughby does not object, Miss Willoughby will condescend to take the part of Nourmahal; having appointed myself, by her sovereign proclamation, the humble Jehan-quire of the Enchantress."

"What say you, Edith?" calmly asked Mrs. Willoughby.

"I cannot, indeed I cannot, mamma. I dare say it's very stupid; but I cannot act, I do not know how," she exclaimed, earnestly.

"I believe you, dear child! But it will be necessary to send an apologetic reply to Mrs. De Vere's message, as she certainly intended to pay you a distinguished compliment."

"But, dear mamma, what can I say? Plead utter ignorance? Say I am incapable of doing credit to her charades, as I never acted anything in my life? Or out with the blunt truth, and declare there is something revolting to me in the idea of exhibiting myself at a public *fête*, in a studied character and attitude that I do not altogether relish? Pray answer for me!" said Edith, laughing.

"I will, Edith. You will find the Bohemian vase on the table in my room; give your flowers water, they are really drooping. Mr. Shirley will excuse a few moments' absence," replied Mrs. Willoughby, gratified as well as diverted at Edith's *naïveté*. "You can say, Walter," she continued, as her step-daughter left the room, "that Miss Willoughby regrets that it is entirely out of her power to oblige Mrs. De Vere on this point, and begs she may be excused."

He looked disappointed, and asked if Mrs. Willoughby disapproved of *tableaux vivants*.

"Under some circumstances, I do—highly and decidedly. The delicate and pure drapery of a virtuous woman's character cannot be but soiled by the oriental association that Mrs. De Vere or her advisers chose for Edith. The signification of the very name of Nourmahal would be in itself an objection; but, independent of all this, such exhibitions foster a false sentimentality in the actors, and steal insidiously from the young fresh heart its modest bloom. I am glad Edith decided as she did without my prompting," she said, earnestly.

"Fashion stamps everything with propriety, my dear aunt!"

"So it may appear to its giddy worshippers," she replied, calmly; "but depend on it, Walter, many of its licensed follies are nevertheless destructive to virtue and happiness. Its exaggerated examples, for instance, are highly injurious in a country where no real distinction of *caste* exists in the masses which form the social scale. Wealth is valued at a disproportionate and exorbitant standard, as an omnipotent key to the privileges of those who are self-constituted the higher classes; and where it does not really and substantially exist, the appearance of it is assumed, too often, to the destruction of honor, pride of character, and self-respect, to attain that envied pinnacle which a false and little ambition lends such enchantment and importance to. Such causes, however, are scarcely recognized as the destructive lever which is undermining society and the national honor of our noble country. Oh, if worth and talent could only change positions with mammon, how soon would a noble emulation elevate the human character to a higher destiny than man has yet known! how fully would be developed all the highest beatitudes of morality. But this is an Utopian dream," said Mrs. Willoughby, checking herself.

"And Mammon wins his way when Seraphs might despair," quoted Walter Shirley, with a smile. "The evils you speak of are too apparent; but, unfortunately for its own good, the world can never be argued out of its follies. But leaving this question, which I frankly confess is rather a new one to me, I fear Mrs. De Vere will be in despair at the unfavorable result of my negotiations."

"I am truly sorry she should have thoughtlessly exposed herself to a refusal, by thinking of Edith for her exhibition. Doubtless she'll excuse her on the score of rusticity. You know she has been vegetating all her life at Woodreve; this is her first season in town. Mrs. De Vere would possibly comprehend a hint to this effect from *you*, Walter—not from me."

Visitors were at this moment announced, and Shirley could only

get an opportunity to offer his escort to Edith for the following evening, and engage her hand for the first set of *quadrilles*, ere he made his adieus. "What a cursed prude my aunt is!" he muttered, as he drew on his faultless glove in the hall; "now for a gallop to Woodreve."

"I merely popped in," said Mr. Bedford, the next morning, while Mrs. Willoughby and Edith were at breakfast, "to say that General Beverly, who has recently been called by the President to occupy an important station in the Cabinet, is in town, and will be at the De Veres to-night; so if you, my gracious lady of Woodreve, will accept of my escort, I will come out of my shell and make my *début* into fashionable society again. He is an old friend of your father's and mine, Miriam."

"You have only offered that which I intended begging as a great favor," replied Mrs. Willoughby.

"A plague on me for being so hasty, then. Had I only waited a little, you would have appreciated the favor ten degrees higher than now when it is volunteered. Who is Edith's cavalier?" said Mr. Bedford, gayly.

"Walter, my nephew!"

"Humph! but good-by. No kiss to-day, Etha? Are you still pouting about yesterday's affair? Bless my soul, if I only had time, I would tell you such a moving adventure, all about the poor artist, and his gratitude."

"Sit down, dear Mr. Bedford, just two minutes," said Edith, throwing her arm around him, and drawing him towards a chair; "positively, you are my prisoner two minutes by yonder clock, and I will release you only on condition that you make a clear breast of it."

"Fair tyrant! Suppose I tell you that the object of your benevolent interest is the most deformed, hideous-looking individual I ever saw; covered with tattered and filthy garments, and uncouth in manners as in person."

"I would ask you if you had clothed and fed the body that contains the soul of genius?" answered Edith, loftily.

"There she goes, like a sky-rocket, towards heaven. You have brightened up the world again, Etha, with the sparkling of your soul," cried Mr. Bedford, rubbing his small, aristocratic fingers together until the joints complained audibly. "Now I will tell you. He was not squalid or ragged; only very, very thinly clad for the season. He is not deformed, or hideous, or uncouth. He is a tall, graceful stripling, of some seventeen or eighteen summers; with a broad, open, blue-veined forehead, and long, waving locks of gold-colored hair. His eyes, large and dark, sparkled with the scintillations of genius, and on each oval cheek glowed

a crimson fever spot. There was no fire on his hearth to temper the freezing cold. But what think you he was doing?"

"Painting?"

"No."

"Writing?"

"No. He was kneeling before a picture of the HOLY VIRGIN, and held in his clasped fingers, attenuated enough they were, a small crucifix that he at intervals pressed to his lips, then uttered imploring prayers in his own musical tongue. Our presence was not observed until an old fool of the party, named Bedford, was obliged to cough down his tears; then he arose, laid his crucifix reverentially down, and with both hands modestly extended with a gesture of welcome, invited us in. My friend told him his pictures were disposed of, and admired by excellent judges. You ought to have seen his proud, happy countenance, Etha. He drew up his slender form, and folded his arms on his breast with a silent bow. It was evident he could not speak, but I saw the peltings of his heart against his side, and knew all. When the gold was poured out on the little table that held his palette, oils, and brushes, he sprang up and knelt again before the VIRGIN, and lifting his hands upwards, and his eyes, which were filled with tears, he whispered: "Gratias. O clemens! O dulcis Marie!" After which, he poured out his gratitude to us. We conversed an hour with him, and, this afternoon, you may think of Raphael Massoletti as thoroughly comfortable."

"He must be an angel," exclaimed Edith, enthusiastically.

"Is not his physiognomy singular for an Italian?" asked Mrs. Willoughby, after a thoughtful silence.

"It is sometimes the case that, among the peasants of Lombardy, you find blue eyes, pale-brown or golden hair, combined with a fair complexion; but it is rare. Now, Edith, when I tell you I have some very important astronomical calculations to make before evening, you will release me."

"Escape, Phœnix of your kind!" she cried, opening her arms, which were folded around him, and kissing his pale, broad forehead ere he went. "Mamma, don't you think, sometimes, that Mr. Bedford is an angel in disguise? They used to walk as men, the sons of God, on the earth."

"He has been the visible angel of my life, Edith; my support and comfort when every other earthly consolation failed me," she replied, sadly. Edith was silent.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN EPISODE.

ANOTHER scene. Another hour of the same bright wintry day. An early November snow had fallen at noon; and just when the brown earth, the sere trees, and house-tops were half concealed by the bridal veil of winter, up blows a soft westerly wind, furling back the dun clouds, and melting the gloom from the sky, until, towards twilight, the sun beamed down red and golden showers of light over all, and one might have fancied that a frozen rainbow had suddenly dissolved amidst the snowy fleece.

"Aha! the angels of light befriend me. Put back those curtains, Ida—farther still, my child; let me not lose one ray; there, I can now safely put the last delicate touches on my work ere nightfall; then, darling, we'll have music, fairy tales, and songs," said a beautiful woman of some thirty years of age, who was engaged in the task of miniature painting, at a table covered with colors, brushes, and a few unfinished pictures. In the midst, stood a curious vase filled with flowers, which diffused a sweet aroma throughout the modest apartment. The child Ida returned to her cushion on the rug, and gathered up, tenderly, in her round, fair arms, a white kitten, flecked here and there with black, like a piece of royal ermine, and watched with an air of satisfaction the gradual closing of the creature's eyes, as its head fell back among the stray tresses on her bosom. The cheerful firelight shone out, like a smile, on the roses of Ida's cheeks, and gleamed underneath her long eyelashes into the depths of her blue eyes, softly and brightly. And on the waves of her pale, golden hair fell the fading sunbeams, kindling up a halo such as one sees around the heads of cherubs in rare old pictures. The whole scene was inexpressibly lovely. No gorgeous furniture decked the apartment; no velvet draperies, or costly carpets, or useless luxuries were there. But taste and refinement were so evident in its arrangements; there was such an expressive indication of a master-mind reigning over all, as invested the *coup-d'œil* with a charm that mere gold cannot buy. The Gobelins could not have produced, from their celebrated looms, more delicate or beautifully colored patterns than those which ornamented the chintz covering of the sofa and chairs, and the rich-looking carpet. Yet the fabric of

each was coarse, and cost but little, and so with the curtains which were gracefully draped over the windows. An open piano stood in a recess, piled up with music; here a table covered with handsomely bound rare volumes, there a marble pedestal supporting an alabaster lamp and flowers, relics of brighter fortunes, refreshed the eye and heart with sure promises of mental enjoyment and intercourse. A few fine pictures, whose merits were not overshadowed by the glare of deep gilt frames, ornamented the walls, and amidst all, like the spirit of peace and contentment, sat the bright genius of the HOME, humming a low, sweet air, that chimed on the stillness of the room like the tinkling of a sunlit fountain, expressing a quiet joyousness and freedom from the vexatious thoughts of life, that lifted up the heart towards Heaven, and filled it with fresh visions of beauty. But the kitten was fated to interrupt the lovely *spirituel* of the scene. Its slumbers were broken by a *sneeze*, then followed a discordant mewing, and a determined struggle, for a few minutes, to escape from Ida's arms; but her superior strength prevailed; and soothing it gently, as a mother would soothe her babe, she had the gratification of seeing it sleep again.

"Hush-sh-sh-sh, ma, dear. Mignon is not well. I'm afraid, if you sing, it will waken her again; then, of course, she'll have a fever, and be quite ill," whispered Ida.

"Poor Mignon! She must have a dose of *cat*nip tea and a hot foot-bath, Ida. I pronounce her disease to be categorically a nervous affection," said the lady, smiling.

"Ma, dear, do you think Mignon will ever grow so cruel as to torment and eat the pretty bright-eyed little mice?" asked the child, after a pause.

"If she survives this illness, I fear she will be guilty of the shocking habit, my love," replied the lady, laughing. Ida sighed.

"But," she resumed, "Mignon is so dainty, it would be a very horrible affair. Don't you think, dear ma, it would be a good plan to have all her teeth pulled out?"

"Possibly," was the answer.

"But, ma dear, if Mignon should—you know it might be so—if Mignon should happen to be an enchanted princess, it would spoil her beauty to have no teeth. Heigh-ho! I don't know what to do."

"Have you forgotten, Ida, how the enchanted princess, in your fairy book, was restored to her natural shape?"

"Oh no, ma dear, that is my favorite story. The white cat, you know, was cut in half, and a most beautiful princess, with locks of gold, and dressed in satin, and lace, and diamonds, ap-

peared in her place," cried the child, with glee. "I will beg pa to cut Mignon in two, the moment he comes, for I really believe she is enchanted."

"She will then be most effectually cured of her propensity to eat mice; but run, darling, I think I hear pa at the door; meet him before he gets up stairs," said the lady, laughing. The child, still holding the kitten in her arms, bounded from the room to meet her father, her little heart overflowing with affection, and her imaginative brain filled with Mignon's enchantment, and other wild dreams of fairy love. But she was disappointed—it was not her father, but a strange lady who was tripping swiftly up stairs towards the parlor.

"Where is your ma, child?" she inquired of Ida, while she scrutinized every portion of her dress. "Your servant told me she was in the parlor; but I don't know where you can have a parlor in such a house as this."

"I will show you, ma'am," replied the well-bred little creature, running up before her. "Here is mamma's parlor; please to walk in."

"How are you, Mrs. Lacy?" said her visitor, walking in.

"Ah! Miss Thorne. How are you, Miss Thorne? Pray, be seated. Take this *fauteuil* near the fire," said Mrs. Lacy, meeting her guest with polite cordiality.

"Thank you; how very comfortable you are here. Really, I had no idea you had such a nice little snuggery. People *can* live without superfluities, and I expect you enjoy your life quite as much as when you were surrounded by the most extravagant luxuries," said Miss Thorne, casting her eyes sharply around the apartment.

"I probably value and enjoy existence more, Miss Thorne, than when fashion engrossed so much of my time. I have more leisure for the improvement of my mind, and those pursuits which I have always loved," replied Mrs. Lacy, without at all resenting her guest's impertinent observations.

"What a blessing it must be to have such a contented mind, to be sure, if it is not the result of indifference! If you, my dear, had expended more of your riches on the poor and destitute, it would have been 'like casting bread on the waters; after many days it would have returned, tenfold, to you.' I see you kept your piano," said Miss Thorne.

"As there was no necessity for parting with it, I retained it. Dear old friend, that it is; it enlivens our evenings, and reminds us so sweetly of the days of 'auld lang syne.' May adversity

never deal so harshly with us, as to banish thy familiar music from our hearth!" exclaimed Mrs. Lacy.

"Dear me, how romantic! I fear, my dear friend, that your trials have not chastened and humbled you as Heaven intended," said Miss Thorne, with a severe aspect.

"Possibly, I do not mope over the reverses and loss of affluence, which have befallen us, as much as the world expects," she replied, blithely. "But I cannot do it; it would be contrary to the natural disposition Heaven has given me. I should be a traitor to God, if I indulged in gloom, and sadness, and despondency. There is so much real enjoyment left to us—so many substantial blessings—that the mere loss of fortune is but a secondary consideration. The sunshine is as bright now, dear Miss Thorne, the flowers of earth as beautiful, music as sweet, the evening sky and its clouds and stars filled with as much silent rapture, the moon as lovely, the affections that twine like verdure around my life as full of value and fragrance, as when riches and splendor gilded our destiny. And, thank Heaven, my heart is unchanged. These things so pure and holy gladden it; it answers back to them, like a stream does to the sunshine, full of their reflected light. The circumstances of fortune have made certain changes around me; but I am myself unchanged."

"But you know, my dear, that the world is entitled to some respect? Its opinions ought to be regarded in certain cases," replied Miss Thorne, thinking, in the odor of her sanctity, that Mrs. Lacy was mad.

"How have I offended the world? I beg its pardon, humbly; but on my honor, Miss Thorne, as I owe it nothing, I can't conceive by what right it meddles with me," said Mrs. Lacy, while the corners of her beautiful mouth curved slightly downwards.

"Oh! I hope you won't be offended; I mean it all for your good; and undertook to come this evening, although I had three societies to preside over, that I might advise you on a particular point in your conduct which is considered reprehensible," said Miss Thorne, nervously.

"Believe me, Miss Thorne, that, acting as I do in strict conformity to honorable principles, and a higher sense of duty than the ethics of the world teach, its praises or blame will affect me very little," she replied, while the color deepened in her oval cheeks.

"Of course not; every one is at liberty to act as they please; but it shows a very high spirit to be above advice, I must say," replied Miss Thorne.

"I am quite willing to hear advice, Miss Thorne, provided there

is no impertinence blended with it. Will you oblige me by stating the object of your visit?" observed Mrs. Lacy, composedly.

"Yes; I might as well come to the point at once. As a Christian, I think it my duty to warn you of the error of your ways; of clinging to the false show and fashions of the world, when God has afflicted you with poverty," exclaimed Miss Thorne, in a transport of rage and religion.

"You are dealing in mysteries; I can no more understand your drift than I can penetrate the mystic secret of the Sphinx," said Mrs. Lacy, calmly. "Please explain."

"And everybody is astonished at it," continued the zealous lady. "You dress as extravagantly as you did in the days of your prosperity; your innocent child is decked off as if she were the heiress of thousands. It is this, Mrs. Lacy, this most unbecoming pretension, and apparent defiance of what ought to humble your proud soul, that your friends complain of."

"Present me kindly to my friends, Miss Thorne, and thank them for the interest they manifest in my welfare," said Mrs. Lacy, rising, and drawing up her proud figure to its utmost height. "There are many associations connected with my innocent wardrobe which may possibly suggest disagreeable ideas, in the minds of my former associates, of ingratitude. But the sight of things which remind them of basking in the sunshine of my fortunes, and flying from the clouds, has been no intentional reproach. My apparel was abundant and costly; my means, afterwards, too limited to throw it aside; and I have had the audacity to make a 'virtue of necessity,' and wear it. But even when the last shred is worn bare, the charitable expectations of my 'friends,' who seem to deem it expedient for me and my child to appear as paupers, will be sadly disappointed. As long as these fingers can hold a pencil, or practise the art of music, to enable me to earn what I expend, I will enjoy the privilege of appearing as a lady, having been guilty of no act to forfeit my character as one; and the pleasure of adorning my beautiful child as my taste may dictate."

The servant threw open the parlor door, and another guest, tall, stately, and elegantly clad, was ushered in. A soft smile rested on her dignified countenance, as she stood holding out both hands towards Mrs. Lacy, in an attitude of inexpressible grace, while she observed—

"Caroline Lacy has not forgotten Caroline Lyle's old friends?"

"Can it—can it be Mrs. Willoughby, of the old Holme, where so many joyous hours of my life were spent? It is! My eyes do not deceive me, and my heart cannot," exclaimed Mrs. Lacy. In another moment she was folded to Mrs Willoughby's bosom, and

when she lifted her face, tears sparkled on her eyelashes, and shed a soft dew on the roseate bloom of her cheeks.

"I wondered why you had not called with the rest of the world," said Mrs. Willoughby; "and, being somewhat tenacious about old friendships, come to quarrel with you for giving me up, as it seems you intended to do. I cannot bear to be forgotten by those I love."

"Forgotten! How could I ever forget one who was the idol of my girlish imagination? whose friendship I coveted beyond that of any other being? yet who was so elevated by every attribute of mind above me, that I scarcely dared aspire to it?" said Mrs. Lacy, pressing her hand. "If you have not lost the art of analyzing unexpressed feelings, you understand all that I would say, if I could find language adequate to my gratification on this occasion."

"And yet you have allowed me to be in town some six weeks without paying me even the compliment of a morning call. Indeed, Caroline, a little salutary scolding will be no more than you deserve," said Mrs. Willoughby, in a pleasant tone, "unless you can defend yourself successfully."

"I confess I heard of your arrival in town," she replied, while an ingenuous blush mantled her cheeks; "but it is so much the fashion of the world to estimate people by the measurement of good or ill fortune, and as the golden waves of Pactolus no longer flowed past our dwelling—"

"You were too proud to come! Too proud to come to one who would have received you as a being purified by the uses of adverse fortune, and revered you for rising so nobly above mean contingencies, and scorning to be the slave of untoward circumstances! But you should have trusted me, Caroline!" said Mrs. Willoughby, earnestly.

"My FRIEND!" said Mrs. Lacy, with emotion.

This conversation, animated and deeply interesting to both ladies, occupied only a few minutes, during which time Miss Thorne had remained a silent and unnoticed spectator of the scene. Such disinterestedness towards one so fallen in fortunes as Mrs. Lacy was incomprehensible to her; she puzzled her narrow intellect, and turned over the circumscribed and illiberal ideas most familiar to her for an explanation of it; but the only conclusion that presented itself to her was the fact that Mrs. Lacy possessed, in the Lady of Woodreve, a most powerful friend and ally, and it would be necessary for her to change her tactics towards her without delay. She had long wished to be on an intimate footing with the rich Mrs. Willoughby. She would have made any sacrifice to have the privileged *entrée* to her house in Chiswicke Square, and be invited to spend the summer at Woodreve Manor; but

heretofore no auspicious incident had occurred to forward her schemes.

"Come and tell me your name, pet," she said, addressing Ida, "and show me your beautiful kitten."

"My name is Ida Lacy," replied the child, without moving.

"Fie, Ida; go to Miss Thorne. Pardon my neglect, ladies, and allow me to present Miss Thorne to Mrs. Willoughby. I was really so delighted at meeting with a friend of 'long ago' so unexpectedly, that I must be pardoned," said Mrs. Lacy, who had quite forgotten the presence of her tormenting guest, and whose generous heart reproached her for an unintentional neglect, which might be maliciously construed into an appearance of petty revenge.

"I believe I have had the pleasure of meeting Miss Thorne before, and must also crave her pardon for not observing her presence earlier," said Mrs. Willoughby, in an affable manner.

"It affords me great pleasure, ladies, to reflect that, although an unobserved witness of your meeting, I was no restraint on you, as I must have been, had not my *petite* size, and the large cushions of this delightful chair, favored my concealment. I beg that neither of you will consider an apology necessary," spoke up the little woman, briskly.

"Pray be seated again, Miss Thorne; if you hurry off just now, I shall fear you imagine yourself *de trop*," observed Mrs. Lacy.

"Not at all, my dear. I will come some other time. I have now two poor people, who are in the most destitute circumstances, to visit. I declare, I am literally fagged to death by the demands of objects of charity on my time; but they must be fed and clothed, you know; we cannot let them die like dogs around us, for want of a little attention," she replied, casting up her eyes with a sigh, which might have been interpreted either as an expression of sympathy, or weariness in well-doing, according to the acuteness and disposition of those who heard it.

"If Miss Thorne will wait a few moments, it will afford me pleasure to drive with her to the scene of her charitable labors," said Mrs. Willoughby; "for I, too, must be gone. May I claim a promise from you, Caroline?"

"Ay; I think I may safely commit myself!" replied Mrs. Lacy.

"Very well. No after-thought of rashness, if you please. You are to come to me every alternate Thursday evening. Nay! I beg it as a favor; and as often during the intervals as you can spare me a visit. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mr. Lacy, but have commissioned Mr. Bedford to bring him to see me on the

score of our old friendship; then I will arrange the matter with him. Come here, darling!" she said, beckoning to Ida, "one kiss—another. Now, those eyes of yours—lift them again. She's a perfect Asiatic, Caroline. Another kiss, thou cherub! Now adieu!"

"Farewell, Mrs. Lacy. You must not be hurt with me for speaking as I did. I am too apt to let my zeal for the good of others lead me to extremes; and I heard so much, you know, that I now *know* to be utterly false. I really hope you will not bear me any ill-will! I am plain spoken; but I believe my heart is right," said Miss Thorne, taking leave.

"It is forgotten, Miss Thorne, and forgiven. I only insist that, under no pretence whatever, you or your associates may consider yourselves privileged, hereafter, to interfere with my private concerns—concerns which I am quite capable of managing without officious advice," said Mrs. Lacy, in a low tone, but with an air of dignity. "As a friend, Miss Thorne, I will be pleased to see you always."

In the Woodreve carriage! Sitting close beside Mrs. Willoughby! Going in state and splendor to overwhelm her paupers with a sense of her importance! What pinnacle of human happiness was there higher than this? According to her directions, the coachman drew up at the entrance of a dreary-looking alley, too narrow for the equipage to turn in, and as she thanked Mrs. Willoughby for her attention, and, in the warmth of her gratitude, grasped her hand, a gold half eagle was deposited therein, accompanied by a low whisper, "*for your pensioners.*" She would have been voluble in her thanks, but Mrs. Willoughby turned to give some directions to her footman, and Miss Thorne could only press her hand on her heart, then point towards Heaven, as she stood on the curb in an ecstasy of admiration and gratified pride. A smile and a nod rewarded her ingenious pantomime; the coach door was closed, and it rolled majestically away.

Some people said, but the world is so uncharitable, that Miss Thorne applied a tithe of all she collected to her own personal uses, feeling that Heaven and charity owed her some small commission for the pains she took for the good of her suffering fellow-beings. Good works that are clamorous of praise will excite envy, and such is the degeneracy of the times that the worst motives are too often imputed to the best deeds. But take comfort, ye who are persecuted for righteousness' sake! There is an EYE that marks and judges our secret souls with justice—whose glance is from ETERNITY, searching, awful, and unsleeping; a POWER which will one day descend amidst glory indescribable,

surrounded with might and majesty; whose army of archangels, great in strength, will bear starry banners, torn from the fragments of the skies; and whose flaming seraphs will burn like eternal suns around his throne, while he rewards with immortal life "those who gave a cup of cold water for His sake;" who "let not their left hand know what their right did;" who "clothed the naked, and fed the hungry," for the love of him whose suffering members they were! Yea, He, who "seeth in secret, will reward them openly."

CHAPTER IX.

By arms assailed, we still can arms oppose,
And rescue learning from her brutal foes;
But when those foes to friendship make pretence,
And tempt the judgment with the baits of sense,
Carouse with passion—laugh at God's control,
And sack the little empire of the soul;
What warning voice can save? Alas! 'tis o'er,
The age of virtue will return no more;
The doting world, its manly vigor flown,
Wanders in mind, and dreams on Folly's throne."

ANON.

WHEN Mrs. Willoughby reached home, the stars were glowing through their shadowy night-veil with soft effulgence, like lustrous eyes through Spanish mantillas, reminding her, with something akin to a pang, of her engagement at Mrs. De Vere's, from whose spacious mansion already floated festive notes of preparation. She ordered the carriage at ten, and without looking into the drawing-room, hastened to her apartment to make her toilet for the occasion. There she found lights and a cheerful fire, beside which, on the marble hearth, chocolate and toast were invitingly displayed. After partaking of a slight repast, she discovered on her dressing-table a fresh bouquet of passion-flowers, which her maid informed her had been left for her by Mr. Shirley, with his regards, a few moments before she came in.

"He could have chosen no fitter emblem," she murmured to herself, as she examined their mystic leaves; "no other flower ever blossomed in my heart—only mine bore thorns as well as flowers."

When Mr. Bedford called at half-past nine, he found Mrs. Willoughby already in the drawing-room, engaged in a quiet discussion with Walter Shirley relative to the distinctive merits of the masters of the Flemish and Italian schools of painting. She preferred the Italian pictures, where religion and ideality blended the subject in one great harmony of design, but thought the Flemish excelled them in their sketches of every-day life, and picturesque realities. They were both judges. Each had seen, in Europe, the finest specimens of the two schools; yet they could not agree, although eloquent arguments were adduced in the support of both opinions. Mr. Bedford's entrance closed the discussion, and the conversation became general.

"Where is Edith, eh? Not finished her toilet yet? I'm afraid she'll be like the old Milesian banner—a 'sun-burst'* to night, overpowering us all with her glory," exclaimed Mr. Bedford, looking at his watch; then surveying Mrs. Willoughby with evident admiration; but he knew her too well to dare a compliment on the elegance and beauty of her appearance, and contented himself with an expressive bow, which she understood, and smiled at his playful homage to her charms. She was attired in a rich purple velvet, that well became the zenith of a beauty like hers. The close-fitting *corsage* and sweeping folds revealed the exquisite outline of her fine person. Her graceful shoulders and softly rounded arms were partially shaded by a rich black lace scarf, thrown carelessly over them. A single diamond, of great value and size—one of the old Nesselrode diamonds—glittered like a star in front of her bodice, where it confined the girdle that encircled her waist. Her pale brown hair was braided in Madonna folds on her forehead, and wound in shining bands around a jet comb at the back of her classically formed head. The passion-flowers, and gloves of the finest and whitest texture, completed her costume. And yet a dreamy sadness, a sort of shadow from an inner cloud, veiled more than half the radiance of her beauty, imparting to one who might scan it closely a sentiment of unrest and pain. Edith soon came down, arrayed with exquisite taste, and looking surpassingly lovely. A robe of white watered silk, trimmed with costly lace, fell in rich shining folds of graceful drapery around her. A string of oriental pearls gleamed and skimmered on the snowy outline of her superbly moulded arms, and a comb composed of the same rare jewels confined her luxuriant hair. A single white japonica was fastened among her

* The poetical title of the banner of Brian Boroihme, sovereign of all Ireland.

curls, and another nestled like a lotus-flower on her bosom. A small bouquet of white jasmine, heliotrope, mignonette, and the sweet-scented verbena, diffused a delicious aroma wherever she moved.

"Transformed, or not transformed, is the question!" exclaimed Mr. Bedford, taking a deliberate survey of her through his spectacles.

"Let this answer for me, unbeliever," she said, kissing him.

"How can I ever thank you, Mr. Shirley, for the lovely flowers you brought me this evening?"

"I am more than repaid by the pleasure they afford Miss Willoughby," he replied, while he wondered at her splendid beauty.

"We will be decidedly the belles of the evening," said Mr. Bedford, opening Edith's fan, and flirting it after a fashion that he assured them was purely Spanish. "But listen to the carriages which are crowding Chiswicke Square—it is now quite ten. Will we not be vulgarly late?"

"We cannot make a successful *entrée* if we wait until the rooms are thronged!" suggested Walter Shirley. And while Mr. Bedford cloaked Mrs. Willoughby, he arranged Edith's large India shawl about her shoulders, and with a deferential but tender air assisted her, by holding her handkerchief and flowers, while she threw her fleecy *nubæ* over her beautiful head. They were among the last guests who arrived at Mrs. De Vere's; and it was only after a tedious delay that they succeeded in effecting a passage through the splendid throng to the reception-room, where Mrs. De Vere, attired in garnet velvet, diamond ornaments and feathers, received their compliments with an ill-concealed air of exultation. Her triumph was as complete as her arrangements were superb. Six rooms, furnished with every costly article that luxury could imagine, art devise, or gold buy, were thrown open. Tables, niches, and consoles were literally covered with the rarest and most fragrant hothouse flowers, which gleamed, like the gems of some fairy garden, amidst the blaze of wax-lights interspersed among them. The splendid chandeliers were wreathed with them, and the massive gilt frames of the enormous mirrors were half concealed by leaves and drooping blossoms, which sent out on the air the incense of their fragrance. The lower extremity of the wide spacious hall had been fitted up like a Persian tent. Blue silk draperies, studded with tiny stars of silver, depended from the lofty ceiling by a glittering ring, and were securely fastened down to the floor of the hall, forming a tent of fine dimensions, beneath whose gorgeous shelter the foliage and blossoms of orange and lemon trees refreshed the senses by their shade and aroma. An

artificial fountain threw up a sparkling jet of water on one side, bedewing the overhanging vines and flowers with its spray, then tinkled softly into a garlanded marble reservoir beneath. Shaded lamps, hung amidst the orange-boughs, gave the effect of moonlight to the scene. The floor was covered with variegated mosses; and luxurious pillows of swan's-down were temptingly piled up in flowery nooks; while, like great pearls, drooped the white Provence roses over all. There, amidst the shade, gleamed the star-like jasmine, and tube roses lifted their snowy diadems, heavy with aroma, towards the coral petals of the oriental pomegranate; and oleander-trees, with their soft, peach-like fragrance, borne down with splendid blossoms, overhung clusters of geranium plants, and lilies of the Nile. One or two fine marble statues, standing like guardian spirits amidst the leaves, imparted a perfect witchery to the *coup-d'œil* of the spot. It was a *bijou* of refined and poetic taste, relieving the glare of the ostentatious splendor around.

Soft strains of music were floating on the air, and hither and thither in the golden light, moving with joyous smiles, or low-uttered words of glee, or gliding slowly to the measured cadences, were the beauty and *élite* of the country. From the cold, ruddy North—from the haughty, dark-eyed South—from the young, blooming West—and the refined, luxurious East, came the representatives of beauty and chivalry to grace the *fête;* but among them all shone Edith Willoughby, the "star of that goodlie company." Apart from her splendid beauty, there was in her manner such a blending of graceful dignity and unaffected joyousness, such an air of high breeding and genuine *bonhomie,* as attracted the involuntary admiration even of those who regarded her as their rival in beauty and fashion. The most elegant men in the room begged the honor of an introduction to her, and vied with each other in their attentions and endeavors to secure her hand for each succeeding set of dances, until it was apparent to all that she was the centre of attraction, the peerless belle of the evening.

"She *shall* be mine," thought Walter Shirley, as he led her through the graceful mazes of a dance, and marked and enjoyed proudly the universal homage paid to her rare beauty. "I will peril life and *honor* to win her—and her fortune."

The Misses De Vere were looking quite lovely in costly attire of lace and jewels. Bessie's whereabouts, as usual, could be traced at any moment by her merry laughter and rattling, while Alice, with a faint tinge of *couleur de rose* on her smooth, transparent cheeks, leaned on a marble console, conversing languidly, and looking as if she thought the whole thing *ennuied* in the extreme.

Coteries appointed their leaders, and cliques selected their objects of ridicule and malice for the night. It is mortifying to humanity and its better feelings to be obliged to confess to such customs in what is called *par excellence* good society; but there is no sunshine without shadow, and no good that is not haunted by a spectre of evil. Perfection is unattainable; and the follies of life only play *Punchinello* to the wise. One fact is worthy of observation, however, as it involves a paradox. It is often too evident that excessive rudeness, and an absence of all the softer and sweeter amenities of life, characterize many members of a portion of the fashionable world, who pique themselves on the prestiges of high descent, good birth, and lofty caste; and who, to support their aristocratic claims, assume a manner to those whom they consider *parvenu*, very antagonistical to genuine good-breeding.

Dora Livingston and Miss Leigh were the life of their coterie; and, when not engaged in dancing, levelled the shafts of their bluntless wit and ill-natured satire against all whom they considered interlopers on the privileges of their own caste, including their entertainers.

"Bessie," said Miss Livingston, grasping her hand for a moment as she was flitting past, "do tell me what old gentleman that is with an excessively red, honest face, fidgeting about as if he knew nobody, and looking so shy?"

"Where?"

"There, child! That haughty Mrs. Willoughby has taken compassion on him, and is doubtless condescending to ask him some question about trade, to stop his onward progress through the window behind her."

"Really, I can't comprehend," stammered Bessie De Vere, coloring.

"Follow the direction of my finger, will you? There, don't you see a yellow vest and a bald, shining head? Whose is it?"

"That—I see now—yes—that is my—I believe it is my father," faltered the foolish girl.

"Lord! I didn't know you had one," ejaculated Miss Livingston. A smothered titter from the aristocratic set indicated their extreme enjoyment of the scene; and Bessie was hurrying away when Harry De Vere, who, contrary to his usual custom, had mingled that evening with his mother's guests, and had overheard the conversation, and was filled with indignation at its impertinence, suddenly stopped her by passing his arm around her waist and saying:—

"He is a father, Bessie, for whom you need never blush; want-

ing, it is true, in fashionable mannerism and fashionable heartlessness, but rich in all the attributes of a noble and pure nature."

His handsome eyes flashed proudly, and his stalwart frame was instinct with dignity, as he bowed low to the group and led his sister away.

"Olympian Jove, by the rolling thunder! Who is he? Did you ever see such eyes?" exclaimed Miss Livingston. "But look! there is Mrs. Cranbonne, with that antediluvian velvet on; I wonder if it is not in its dotage! Talk of velvets being elegant, forsooth—I'll *never* have one; they are the meanest things people can buy; one can *never* wear a velvet out!"

"Hush, Dora, here comes Fred De Vere—the polkas are commencing—I wonder whom he'll ask to polka! It's strange he didn't ask that Miss Willoughby, whom all the men seem mad about to-night?" observed Miss Leigh.

"He did ask her," replied a gentleman of their party. "I heard him; but I suspect she is prudish about waltzing, for she told him she was engaged to Bessie De Vere. There they go now—swimming to the music like two clouds before a summer breeze! Honor me, Miss Livingston."

"Shall I have the *félicité* of doing a polka with Miss Leigh?" said Frederick De Vere, passing his arm with familiar assurance about her waist, and taking a position with the most condescending indifference. And one by one the youthful maidens were coupled with agreeable partners; another moment, they were in the maddening whirl of the vortex of the wild, spell-like dance, reclining on strange arms, their dizzy heads leaning on strange bosoms, borne round and round, heedless of fashionable freedoms and unholy thoughts, until their senses were lost to all except the frenzy of the hour!

"Bedford, Bedford! we are too old, my boy, for these sprightly amusements; too far down the hill to run, my friend," said General Beverly, the statesman and patriot, whose hair had bleached from raven black to snowy white in the service of his country. "But dy'e remember, Bedford, our heydays at Woodreve, when poor Shirley was alive. Ah, those were the days! those were the times! Things are changed since then."

"Fine, glorious times those, general! But I can't for the life of me feel old. I leave all ideas of age and infirmities to my friends. 'Pon honor, sir, I am half tempted at times to believe in the German science of transfusion of souls, and fancy the 'Wandering Jew' has cheated me of mine and left his own, with all its earthly immortality, in its place. I think, if I could pre-

vail on Mrs. Willoughby to dance, I could trip with the youngest of them, on the 'light fantastic toe.'"

"A sinecure. He knows it, general—hence his assurance," said Mrs. Willoughby, pleasantly.

"You would be a formidable rival to your beautiful daughter, madam," said the general, bowing with all the elegant *empressement* of the old school. "Your generosity is unselfish, I must say."

"It is mere choice. I never dance," she replied, somewhat coldly.

General Beverly, who knew the history of her trials, felt that he had been guilty of a *contretemps*, and, with well-bred tact, immediately gave a turn to the conversation by referring to a "monkish manuscript several centuries old, and magnificently illuminated, that all the *savans* in town had been in raptures with during the week, and which had been recently purchased, at an enormous price, by a wealthy American citizen, from an impoverished noble of Padua."

"Mrs. Willoughby and myself spent a morning dreaming over it," observed Mr. Bedford; "and what a lifetime of patient, religious toil it exhibits! The brilliant coloring of the illuminations, and the untarnished gilding, would almost cheat one into the belief that they were laid on yesterday, instead of centuries ago. It is a curious and valuable relic of antiquity."

"My dreams were filled with shadows vague and mysterious, and full of unspeakable sadness—nay, almost awful, from being veiled—as I turned over its pages of old," said Mrs. Willoughby, "My feelings were quite of another kind when permitted to inspect the priceless old relics at Ferrara. I mean the manuscripts of Tasso's 'Jerusalem,' and Gaurina's 'Pastor Fido.'"

"By my sword, madam, the bare mention of them almost tempts me to make a pilgrimage to Ferrara. I have been so much in the camp for the last fifty years, I had almost forgotten the idol of my days of romance, Tasso," exclaimed General Beverly, with animation.

"And what are all the old musty manuscripts on earth, with due deference be it spoken, to the associations conjured up by the old Ezzelin tower at Padua?" cried Mr. Bedford.

"Aha! Welcome, Bonatti," said the general, laughing. "But commend me to old manuscripts, and lighted halls, and music and dancing, rather than an hour at midnight in that haunted tower where Bonatti so often entertained the devil."

"Sir, he was no sorcerer, no juggler. His knowledge of astronomy and the more abstruse science of astrology was so profound,

that all the petty princes of Italy contended for him," said Mr. Bedford, warmly. "His services alone to that gallant soldier Count Guido Novello should entitle him to your regard, sir."

"How the devil, Bedford!—but, excuse me, madam. What had Bonatti's star-gazing to do with Novello's victories?" inquired General Beverly, highly diverted.

"Most arch-unbeliever in *la belle science*, if you have forgotten, I will tell you. When Count Guido was about marching on a predatory excursion, or gallant enterprise, Bonatti, from the loop-hole of his cell, in the tower of Forli, watched the stars. At the first peal of his bell, the count put on his armor; at the second, mounted his horse; at the third, marched with his followers to battle. He ascribed all his victories to Bonatti," said Mr. Bedford, proudly, as if he had vindicated most satisfactorily the astrologer's character from the general's aspersions.

"A clear case of *diablerie*, in my opinion, Bedford," he replied. Mr. Bedford would have gone into a learned defence of the art of the Chaldees on the spot; but, at the moment, Frederick De Vere, who wished to make an agreeable impression on these distinguished guests, and, moreover, display some of his Parisian mannerism to Mrs. Willoughby, sauntered towards them, and, with all the assurance of blissful ignorance, begged, with a superb bow, the honor of a polka with her! Mr. Bedford turned away to hide a smile he could not, for his life, suppress; the general adjusted his plaited frills; while Mrs. Willoughby colored up, and, half indignant, half diverted, declined the honor.

"Mr. Bedford and myself, sir, have both been defeated on the same point," said the general, coming urbanely to his relief; for he was somewhat disconcerted at her unexpected refusal of an honor which he proffered to but a chosen few. "We were speaking of some interesting relics at Padua. Were you there, Mr. De Vere?"

"I believe I was at some such place. Padua!—Padua! Yes, I was there about an hour, on my route to Venice," he replied, twirling his moustache.

"Miriam," said Mr. Bedford aside, while every muscle of his countenance beamed with mirth, "why did you not polka with the beau? I think I see Juno romping over Olympus with Ganymede!"

"Extinguish thy laughter, profane mortal," replied Mrs. Willoughby, while one of those rare glances of mirth, that sometimes burst like sunshine over her face, now flitted over it at the idea. "You have been quite a traveller, Mr. De Vere?"

"I spent three years on the Continent, madam."

"And what thought you, Mr. De Vere, after clambering through regions of icy cliffs, perpetual snows, and freezing storms, of the first glimpse you caught of the Eden-like plains of Lombardy?" asked Mr. Bedford.

"I do not remember. I fancy I was *ennuyée* with my *maladie* and fatigue, and could not attend to scenery. But I have heard other travellers assert that *l'Italie est le jardin de l'Europe.* I could exist nowhere but in *la belle Paris,*" he replied, with complacent *nonchalance.*

"Did a residence there improve your health, Mr. De Vere? It's a fine place for enjoyment, sir. I spent a year in the French capital myself once," said the general, politely.

"*Dévilément. On m'a conseillé de boire du lait d'anesse, remède horrible. Cependant, je n'en suis bien trouve. Mai j'attribue ce changement favorable plûtot à ces sauces adorables dans lesquelles excellent les Parisiens, et aux pâtés de foie gras que je trouve si appetissants,*" he replied, with an indescribable air.

"Ass's milk and geese livers! A fitting diet, truly, for a man, or thing, that would travel through Europe with closed eyes. He would have been drummed out of Sparta—bringing home the follies of foreign lands, and gaining nothing by whatever good or great he may have seen," muttered Mr. Bedford, as he walked off.

"You are weary, Edith—Miss Willoughby, pardon me. Leave this heated apartment. There is, not far hence, a shaded, quiet spot, as still and beautiful as a shrine, where your idols, the flowers, send forth their fragrant incense without worshippers," said Walter Shirley, in his low, musical tones.

"I am *almost* weary of the glare and splendor, I am such a rustic in my feelings. I place myself under your guidance, Mr. Shirley; the flowers are such a temptation. Where is this lone isle of beauty?" replied Edith, glad of an escape.

"I will lead you thither, as I wish to guide you alway, and forever, to life's sunniest spots. Not the violet-breathing gardens of Pæstum, or its twice-blooming roses, were more delicious. Come; now throw off the sandals of worldly thoughts—we enter."

But the shrine was not lonely. With folded arms, and a shadow of gloom on his fine brow, Harry De Vere leaned thoughtfully on a pedestal that supported a pastil, chafing his sensitive spirit by brooding over casual observations he had overheard as he moved among the crowd, quite a stranger to his mother's fashionable clique, relative to her former obscure origin and present ostentation. Miss Livingston inflicted the last blow that caused him to seek the cover of this lovely spot, the creation of his own poetic fancy and correct taste. "Would I could lift the veil from their

hearts, that my poor deluded mother could see the cheat—the imposture! A moment's glimpse would make her rational! There is not one in yonder crowd, who now bask and flutter in the sunshine of her wealth, who would not fly, as from a leper, at the first mutterings of the storm that threatened her! Even now, they barely tolerate her as a means of gratification and amusement for themselves, while they sneer at her pride, and ridicule her position."

But lifting his eyes they fell on Edith's upturned face. The music of her voice, which he indistinctly heard, her rare beauty, her gentle manner, the quiet rapture of her smile, and the flashing softness of her eyes, dispelled for a moment the bitter influences that weighed on his sensitive heart. Lost to all else, he gazed on her from his shaded covert with sudden and rapt devotion, as if the ideal of his dreams had by some weird spell become incarnate before him. Pausing to admire, stooping, almost kneeling at times to inhale the odors of more lovely flowers, her innate love of the beautiful gratified beyond imagination, she yielded herself up to the sweet enjoyment, the pure pleasure, of the moment. Neither Walter Shirley nor herself had yet seen Harry De Vere; but they were now far in the tent, and he almost felt her breath on his cheek; only a delicate tracing of vines separated them, vines of white jasmine in full flower. She bowed down her lovely head to examine an unusually large cluster; the light pressure threw a single spray in blossom across his forehead; in an instant he separated it from the stem, and thrust it into his bosom, a souvenir of the moment.

"I am glad to lose sight of them; they lift their heads so aspiringly, as if forgetful from whence they sprung," said Edith, in reply to some remark of Walter Shirley's, about one or two splendid specimens of dahlias. "But, oh! this is so beautiful; it is a fit dwelling-place for Peris and angels!"

Harry De Vere thought she referred to his family, and when, with a stately mien, he stood forth, she drew coldly back, wondering who it could be with such a "proud, dark brow, when all was festivity and light around him." He marked the change in her countenance; he saw her tall, graceful figure drawn up to its full height, and with a haughty bow he passed from her presence, muttering, "She is like the rest; what treason to my pride to indulge even in so brief a dream!"

"Who is he?" asked Edith.

"Some stranger guest, I fancy; but sit here, Miss Willoughby; these cushions of down, which I have piled up, invite you to rest,

after the fatigues of the dance!" he replied, taking her hand to lead her towards them.

"Thank you, Mr. Shirley!" she replied, again bending over to examine the glowing petals of a rare cactus flower; "but the shade and fragrance of this fairy nook have already refreshed me. I will linger a moment longer, then return."

"And, like a rare gem, will I string this fleeting moment on the chain of a life otherwise darkened. Do you believe in presentiments, Miss Willoughby?"

"In happy ones, I do. Sadness is a word I only know the meaning of from dictionaries. Should it ever intrude on me, there is a sunshine in my heart that will brighten it up beautifully," she said, in a gay tone.

"You are too happy for this earth, Edith! The light footfalls of your spirit brush not even the dew from life's flowers; how, then, can you comprehend the mysterious shadowings of a heart like mine? how enter within its portals to desolate regions which have never been brightened even by a mother's love? It were wicked, selfish in me to ask it," said Walter Shirley, while his voice trembled with emotion, and his eyes rested in unutterable sadness on her.

"I knew not your life had been so sad a one, Mr. Shirley," replied Edith, with simple genuine feeling. "But henceforth let it not be so. True friendship will never shrink away, even from the closed portals of a desolate heart; it will patiently and lovingly wait until it can enter with its olive branch, and whisper peace."

"And who, beautiful Edith, will bestow so rich a boon on me? I am too proud to go to and fro in the world, begging crumbs of affection from the few kind hearts in it. I could not bear to be pitied," he said, bitterly.

"And should they be offered, would you refuse them?" she said, extending her hand with a radiant smile. He grasped it, then lifted it to his lips, but ere it touched them it was withdrawn. "Henceforth we will be friends, Mr. Shirley."

"I dared not hope even for your friendship, Edith; but it will keep me from evil; it will minister like an angel to my wayward gloom; henceforth, it will sweeten the bitter waters of my turbulent nature!" he said, sadly.

"And why should you not have hoped for my friendship, Walter Shirley? Am I so proud, so ungenerous, or cold of heart, that you, connected by the ties of blood and affection with those I most love, should have doubted it?" she asked.

"You are so beautiful, so worshipped, Edith Willoughby, your nature so gladsome, how could I hope it would sympathize with a

heart which, unveiled, presents only a wreck of happiness? I prayed, I yearned for it; it brightened my dreams, but then

'The mortal coldness of the heart, like death itself, came down,'
BYRON.

to hush the whispering into utter silence. My life, sweet Edith, has not been without sin. I have erred. My course from boyhood was unchecked and unguarded by wise and judicious love; that love, Edith, which can discriminate and discipline the wild impulses of the heart. Hence my fitful joys were sought amidst phantoms which glided off, leaving me the lees of bitterness. But I will not pain you; be yours the holy office to sustain my repentant heart, for oh! it has been sorely jaded in its struggle with life!"

"Poor Walter!" said Edith, with deep feeling; "come oftener among us. We will try, mamma, Mr. Bedford, and I, to infuse into your existence a more genial influence. They have made my life one sweet dream of happiness; and why not yours? Forget the errors of the past; henceforth let your course be onward and upward!"

He leaned his face on his hand, and Edith's unsuspecting nature suggested to her that it was to hide his emotion, and looked pityingly on him, but he—exulted. "I have touched the right chord of her romantic soul," thought he; "I have awakened her tenderness and pity, and flattered her foolish, womanly nature, by persuading her that she alone can lead back an erring son of light like me to repentance. You are my deliverer, Edith," he said, at last.

A party entered at the moment, whose gay laughter and extravagant exclamations of admiration of the fragrant bower they had just discovered, interrupted him; but it was a relief to both; and he turned, with his usual elegant *sang froid*, and addressed himself to Bessie De Vere in a vein of mirthful badinage so apparently from his heart, that it grated on Edith's finer feelings, and she could but wonder at the facility which could change, or so soon hide, the current of bitterness and pain under a mask of enjoyment; but she remembered the stanza of a lyre he had once quoted:—

"Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hopes of rest,
'Tis but as ivy leaves around the ruined turret wreathe,
All green and wildly fresh without, but gray and worn beneath."
MOORE.

Then, in her simplicity, she pitied the arch-dissembler.

But Mrs. De Vere's proudest hour of triumph was at hand.

The band played a grand march of Rossini's, the doors of the supper-room were thrown open, and the brilliant company entered. If she had exulted in the exquisite delicacies and unseasonable rarities which were served round during the evening, on massive silver waiters, to her guests; if she had received their compliments on the elegance and profusion of her entertainment with an air which distinctly expressed, "I merit it all;" she was elated to an unapproachable region of complacent satisfaction, when, seated at the head of the ample board, she looked down through vistas of gold, silver, and sparkling glass, innumerable wax-lights, pyramids of candied fruits, icebergs of cream, interspersed with clusters of glowing flowers and rare wines, which gleamed out rosy hues like great carbuncles. And in the midst of all, elevated in glass fruit-holders which were gold-bound, were the forced strawberries, large, ripe, and luscious. The guests, brilliant with jewels, beauty, fashion, and plumes; with appetites whetted by the exercise of dancing, and the late hour, enjoyed the luxuries of the table with admirable *goût*. But we will not linger here; we will leave to the imagination of our readers the progress of the feast and its conclusion. We could never chronicle the small details of eating, considering it a most unpoetical and disagreeable necessity. Suffice it to say that Mrs. De Vere had the hospitable gratification of seeing everything rapidly diminish, while each hiatus was filled up with the most flattering references to her excellent taste. Honest old John De Vere had long ago retired to his snuggery, and was, perchance, dreaming over the days of yore.

After supper, all thronged to the temporary theatre that had been fitted up for the charades, where after, a few polite difficulties and a soft crushing of silks against satins and velvets, they were comfortably seated on the cushioned seats which had been erected for their convenience.

> "Back to the scenes such smiles should grace,
> The wandering nymphs their steps retrace;
> And reach the spot with rapture new,
> Just as the veils asunder flew,
> And a fresh vision burst to view."
>
> MOORE.

An interval of silent and intense expectation ensued; for it had been whispered that these charades were to excel everything of the kind that had ever been attempted before. "When *will* the curtain rise?" "It is past one, now!" were whispered. Then followed a pause; the tinkling of a silvery-toned bell was heard; the handsome curtain slowly ascended, and a voice, that Edith recognized as Walter Shirley's, announced "Ginevra Orsini;" then the

young Doria's bride—clad in silver vest and flowing robes of white brocade, embroidered with silver thread, clasped from the throat down with emeralds, and a coronet of pearls on her brow, underneath which flowed her black, waving hair over white, polished shoulders—glided in, leaning on the arm of her bridegroom, who, clad with princely splendor in the picturesque costume of that magnificent century, gazed down into her eyes with a look of rapt fondness. Suddenly, with a joyous and gleesome countenance, Ginevra whispered something in his ear that caused him to smile, then, lifting his hand to her lips, she flitted away, only looking back once to make him a sign not to follow her; then all was dark, and the same clear, musical voice recited the story.

"Great was the joy; but, at the bridal feast,
When all sat down, the bride was wanting there;
Nor was she to be found! Her father cried,
'Tis but to make a trial of our love.'
* * * * *
Nor from that hour could anything be guessed,
But that she was not."
* * * "The house remained awhile
Silent and tenantless—then went to strangers.
* * * Full fifty years were past, and all forgot,
When on an idle day—a day of search—
A mouldering chest was noticed, and 'twas said,
By one as young and thoughtless as Ginevra,
'Why not remove it from its lurking-place?'
'Twas done as soon as said, but on the way,
It burst and fell, and lo! a skeleton,
With here and there a pearl—an emerald stone—
A golden clasp, clasping a silver thread!
All else had perished, save a nuptial ring,
And a small seal, her mother's legacy,
Engraven with a name—the name of both,
'Ginevra.' There then had she found a grave."

Rogers.

Edith's imagination was highly excited; she remembered well the story; she shuddered, now that it seemed to be brought with all its awfully wild reality before her, and clasped Mr. Bedford's arm almost convulsively. But no one observed her agitation; all were enchanted; and prolonged plaudits, expressed by the gentle pattering of gloved hands, signified their appreciation of the scene. There was an instantaneous hush the moment the first tinkle of the bell sounded, a long breath drawn, and the curtain slowly lifted revealed the interior of an old turret. Through a single window streamed down a flood of moonlight on a female form, pale, and beautiful, reclining on a rude couch! "Medora!" was announced.

A door opened, and the Corsair with a wild and hurried glance entered. He gazed a moment on the still, white form lying in the moonlight. She seemed to sleep; her pale golden tresses fell in shining waves around her, half shading her marble arms and calm face. A few flowers were grasped in her fingers, and some almost withered lay on the marble floor where they had fallen. Why paused the man of guilt? what dreadful thought shot like an ice-bolt through his heart? He approached closer, nearer; then gazed for a moment down on the sealed eyelids. It was all revealed; *she was dead;* and with a gesture of inexpressible agony he touched the cold brow with his lips. Had the thrill of their coldness congealed his life-blood to ice, that he stood so pale and motionless, with his dark eyes, like sepulchral lamps, gleaming down on her? But no more was seen; and, while sudden darkness fell on the touching scene, the story was recited.

"He turned not—spoke not—sunk not—fixed his look,
And set the anxious frame that lately shook;
We gazed—how long we gazed despite of pain,
And knew, but dare not own, we gaze in vain!
In life itself she was so still and fair,
That death with gentle aspect withered there,
And the cold flowers her colder hands contained,
In the last grasp as tenderly were strained
As if she scarcely felt, but feigned a sleep,
And made it almost mockery yet to weep.
The long dark lashes fringed her lids of snow,
And veiled—thought shrinks from all that lurked below—
Oh, o'er the eye Death most exerts his might,
And hurls the spirit from her throne of light;
Sinks those blue eyes in that long, last eclipse,
But spares as yet the charm around her lips;
Yet—yet they seem as they forbore to smile,
And wished repose, but only for awhile;
But the white robes and each extended tress,
Long—fair—but spread in utter lifelessness,
Which late the sport of every idle wind,
Escaped the baffled wreath that strove to bind—
These and the pale, pure cheek became the bier;
But she is nothing! Wherefore is *he* here?"

BYRON.

As the last line was uttered, the curtain again fell, and a murmur of applause, that conventional restrictions could not restrain, burst from the delighted spectators, not unmingled with many a gentle sigh and silent tear, then a quivering of fans and feathers, and a low hum of conversation ensued, until the signal for the opening of the third charade produced a deep silence, and arrested every eye. The curtain is lifted! Another night-scene, on a

wild mountain-cliff overhanging the sea! Crags and rocks, and elfish-looking trees, rise round and above it. In the midst is reared a rude stone altar, lit up by its own red fires, which cast a wild lurid glare around! Near it stands the noble Gheber HAFED, in a rich Persian dress, confined around his waist with a broad belt, whose mystic characters were studded with gems. A scymitar hangs by his side—where is its scabbard? His majestic countenance wears a lofty look of desperate daring, and his black eyes flash defiance. But Hinda, with hands clasped on her bosom, and her black hair bursting from its circlet of diamonds, pale and timid steals to his side. She touches his hand—then sinking with a wild cry at his feet, points to some far-distant object. With one hand he seeks to raise the beautiful suppliant, with the other he covers his face, that she may not see the blending of love and pity with its wilder, fiercer passion. Darkness shut not out this scene until Walter Shirley's voice, rich with emotion, echoed the meaning of Hinda's wild pantomime.

"I pray thee, as thou lov'st me, fly!
Now—now ere yet their blades are nigh!
Oh haste, the bark that bore me hither
Can waft us o'er yon darkling sea,
East—west—alas! I care not whither,
So thou art safe, and I—with thee!
Go where we will, this hand in thine,
Those eyes before me smiling true,
Through good and ill, through storm and shine,
This world's a world of love for us!
On some calm, blessed shore we'll dwell,
Where 'tis no crime to love too well—
Where thus to worship tenderly,
An erring child of light like thee,
Will not be sin, or if it be,
Where we may weep our faults away,
Together kneeling night and day,
Thou for *my* sake at Alla's shrine,
And *I* at *any God's for thine*."

MOORE.

"Exquisite!" "beautiful!" "affecting!" "sentimental!" were heard on all sides, and the gloved hands pattered a perfect *réveillon* as the magic curtain slowly unrolled towards the stage floor. Edith's imagination had been fascinated—spell-bound; but her delicate sense of propriety was shocked by the romantic exhibitions, the sentiments conveyed, and the licensed freedom. Her cheeks glowed with the hues of modesty, whose pure, sensitive dignity could scarcely comprehend more of the scenes than their unfitness—but, simple Edith! she heard such unqualified ex-

pressions of approbation of the whole—such praise awarded to the *personæ* of the charades, that she was beginning to fear it was sheer stupidity on her part not to fall into the ecstasy that the rest did, until Mr. Bedford, who had been watching her countenance, whispered, "And they wanted *you*, our Edith, to be a *Nourmahal*, forsooth! To exhibit yourself before a gaping audience, kneeling at the feet of an Eastern Sultan! Humph! I'd rather see you milking cows for honest old Markham's dairy, Edith, 'pon my soul I would!"

"Dear Mr. Bedford, you'll be overheard," she whispered in a fright; "and we shall both be black-balled out of society!" then she could but laugh.

"I won't hush, Edith; the dowagers behind us are deaf—the rest are stupid," he replied, in the same low tone. "Daughters of the republic are these? Christian maidens? Future wives and nursing-mothers of American heroes and statesmen? Lord! Lord! Such things might have been tolerated among the *Hetæræ* of Athens, but never, never among the proud women of Sparta." Mr. Bedford's "Sparta" was equal to Mr. De Vere's "Divers;" it was no use to say another word, good, bad, or indifferent then; and Edith watched the progress of two comic *tableaux vivants*, with a sense of more rational enjoyment than either of the romantic charades afforded her. Music and conversation, and the first stir of departure, created an agreeable variety to what had preceded it; people felt relieved to think there was nothing more to admire and envy. In the midst of it, Walter Shirley came round, and, as he bowed his way through the assemblage, smiling and uttering agreeable nothings and *bon-mots* to those who greeted him with the most profuse compliments, his eyes sought Edith's, over and often, as if her approval and smile made all else indifferent to him. She received him with a softer smile, and, he thought, a conscious manner, which led him to hope that their recent conversation had not been forgotten. He sighed as she made room for him beside her, and said, in a low tone, "I can wear the mask bravely to all but you. Like the hunted Gheber on his cliff—my woes unsoftened by a Hinda's love—solitary of heart, why may I not, like him, die? But I have brought a shadow on your brow, sweet friend. May I ask," he said aloud, "how Mr. Bedford is pleased with the spectacle?"

"You read finely, Walter, and they are the fashion—these charades!"

"Mr. Bedford a hypocrite?" laughed Edith, pressing the old man's hand affectionately.

"Fashion makes us *all* so, child, more or less; but I am too

ultra in my notions for the age. I am conscious of it; so don't challenge me again, anybody. Mrs. De Vere is certainly no bungler; she's a woman of taste and tact; and in conforming as she does with a magnificently liberal spirit to the laws of fashion, she only complies with what she considers an imperative duty. But I hate sentimentality, and most of all fashionable sentimentality," he replied, smiling, in an undertone. "PROMENADE ALL," now resounded through the spacious saloon, and to the sound of harmony, grand, inspiring, and noble, Mrs. De Vere's "five hundred friends" marched in couples to the drawing-rooms—to partake of chocolate and coffee, and make their adieus. The town clock, that hoary old tyrant that marked the hour of so many births, and tolled the knell of so many departing souls, chimed "*Three*" as the last carriage rolled away from the festive mansion. A heavy snow had fallen during the night, and through many a crevice and broad chink in the homes of the poor whistled the wintry winds, freezing the dying babe, and racking the shivering frame of poverty, until the wail arose from their hearts, of "How long, oh Lord! how long?" But past them rolled the sons and daughters of wealth. They felt not the intense cold; they heard not the bitter cry; and when half buried in their downy beds, under satin coverlids, how could they realize the fact that gaunt, hunger-wasted forms sought rest on the frozen earth, or closed their sunken eyes on straw?

CHAPTER X.

"What is noble? To inherit
Wealth, and fame, and high degree?
There must be some other merit,
Higher yet than these for me!
Something greater far must enter
Into life's majestic span,
Fitted to create and centre
TRUE NOBILITY IN MAN."

No signs of life, or breakfast, appearing the next morning, when Mr. De Vere and Harry came down at their usual hour, they contented themselves with coffee and a chop at the table of a *restaurant;* after which they shook hands with a kindly "good-morning," as was their daily custom, and went to their respective

places of resort and business. The old shipping-merchant to the exchange, to look over the official accounts of the value of stock, and discuss with his old associates in trade the probable results of the news by the last European steamer, which reported a rise of some percentage in cotton. Here he was looked on as an oracle; and while the younger merchants gathered around him to hear his opinions, the older and more experienced ones listened with respectful attention and nods, which indicated very expressively their approbation of whatever he said. And such was the unlimited confidence that all felt, not only in his judgment concerning the most profitable way of managing intricate mercantile affairs, but in the benevolence and overflowing kindness of his nature, that, whenever a commercial crisis occurred, attended by contingencies to some, that almost maddened them with thoughts of bankruptcy, there he was ready and willing to hear the story of their disasters, and by generous loans enable them to regain their credit, and sustain their tottering affairs. "He's in a tight place," was the remark, when a merchant was seen cornered with the old man, talking low and earnestly, while he sat with his eyes down, and his chin leaning on his cane, listening with a patient, thoughtful look: "Yes, he speculated rather imprudently, but De Vere will get him on his feet again."

"And sirs," he would sometimes boast, with a beaming smile, "to the honor of human nature and manhood, and especially of merchants, I can say of a truth, I have *never* lost one cent by helping a fellow-creature along in his difficulties." And thither the old merchant prince daily resorted. Here he was of importance; here he was appreciated, and his worth ungrudgingly acknowledged; and here he forgot the cold heartlessness of those who should have brightened up the home of his age, and who, notwithstanding all their delinquencies, were dear to his unselfish nature.

Twelve o'clock found the mansion, so recently the scene of festive gayety, closed and silent, while the inmates still slumbered away in uninterrupted repose the fatigues of the night. One solitary footman was creeping about the reception-room, replenishing the grate, dragging the heavy chairs into their respective places, and anon pausing to yawn; then, shaking up the cushions, which he deposited in a luxurious pile on the lounges, he came to a dead halt, and gazed with a countenance where despair and horror were depicted, through the open door, at the confused vista beyond, where such a state of disorder existed, and so much real labor loomed out from the chaos, that it was a distracting mystery to his obtuse faculties, where the good work of order and regene-

ration was to commence. The contemplation was painful, and he plunged down on the rug with a prolonged whistle, and, seizing the poker, shot it into the glowing coals, and made a miniature Vesuvius of the grate; then arose to view, at a more convenient distance, the eruption of gas and heat he had occasioned. The act appeared to give him courage, for he turned with a deliberate air towards the disheartening prospect; surveyed it with a calm philosophic indifference that was truly admirable, and exclaimed:

"Vell, here is trouble! But it is a great satisfaction for a gemman ob color to have a sitivation with people as knows how to do things up brown—it guvs a fellow consequence, 'specially 'mongst the fair sect—in pertikelar on Sundays."

Hans Andersen says: "It is not only possible but natural for people to experience great anguish and suffering, and be at the same time excessively vain." "Den, crackee," continued the sable footman, "ain't Mister Mansfield, ob Chiswicke Square, de mirror ob fashion—*ain't* he some pumpkins? I tink I see mysef now! My beaver sot on so—my red neck-tie a flarin' in style—my superfine broadclof coat all shiney—my viskers smellin' like roses—an' my yaller kids—ya-hi-yi-ye-ya-ya, ya ya ya-ya, a, a, ha!" The reflection was overpowering—the sable dandy unconsciously dropped the coal shovel on the rich carpet, and turned to survey himself in the splendid pier-glass before him. "Good arternoon, Miss Mumps—hopes your visit to de operoar didn't gin you cold; de singin' vos magnificant!" He continued, bowing to an imaginary Miss Mumps, "It's an extrornary plesure, to be sure, to be Miss Mumps's beau—her dad is a swell—von ob de big bugs, and she persecutes de piany; den, lor' gor' a'mighty, vot eyes! Dat Miss Villoughby's is nothink to Miss Mumps's eyes—lor', no! Her'n is like lightnin' bugs in de day time, to de dewine orbs ob Miss Mumps; dey can't begin to shine in de same company! Oh no! ya-ya-hi, ya-ya. What dat? de bell?" Sure enough the hall bell summoned him from his ecstatic reverie, and with muttered curses he went to answer it. It was Harry De Vere, who had returned to get some diagrams of an improved invention of his own, relative to the application of a new propelling power in steam, to show Mr. Bedford, with whom he had an engagement at one, to explain to him the complex meaning of his designs, which he fondly and proudly hoped would create a new era in the history of his favorite science. While he was shaking the snow from his feet, a poor woman, thinly and insufficiently clad, and whose careworn features were pinched with cold, came up the broad marble steps, and in a timid voice inquired, "Is Mrs. De Vere in?"

"No!" replied Mansfield.

"I have brought home some work she sent to me two weeks ago," she replied, with a sigh. "She told me to make it up as quick as possible, and she would pay for it as it was finished. I am sorry the lady is out, for, oh sir, I am much in need now of assistance. I will come again this evening, though. May-be she'll be home then?"

"Missus mustn't be bothered to-day, marm, at no time! We's had a grand ball, you see; all the quality *vos* here, and she'll be too much fertigued, when she *do* come in, to see 'bout it," he replied, with an air of unapproachable dignity, and was about closing the door in her face, when Harry De Vere pushed him aside, and said to her, in a kindly tone: "My mother, madam, as the servant informs you, is very much fatigued; she did not retire until five o'clock this morning, and, I presume, has not yet risen; but, come in, and be seated near the fire. I will go up and see!"

"Thank you kindly, sir. I am sorry to seem importunate. I could wait longer, only my poor old father is dying, I'm afraid, for want of the common necessaries of life," she replied, taking the chair he offered her beside the comfortable fire, then handing him a bill for five dollars, with which he left the room. Mrs. De Vere was in a sound, refreshing sleep, when he stepped softly to her bedside and whispered, "Mother." But he was compelled to call again and again, ere he could rouse her sufficiently to comprehend the meaning of his unusual visit; and when she was fully aware of its import, she was furious: "The subject was too inconsiderable, too unimportant, to disturb her about; her nerves would be shaken a month to come by it!" she cried, snatching the neat parcel that Harry, in the goodness of his heart, had taken up to her, and throwing it with infinite disdain into a corner. "And go, sir, immediately from my room, you unfeeling child, and tell the creature that her impertinence is unbearable; and, to punish her for it, I will not pay her one stiver until the last chemise is done." Then she buried her head under the satin coverlid, and ere he reached the bedroom-door, an audible snore gave evidence that she had resumed her nap. Harry De Vere's calm, high-souled nature was for a moment indignant; his best feelings were outraged by his mother's conduct; his cheeks became colorless, and his lips quivered; but there was a still, pure angel beside him, and it whispered, "Forget thy petty annoyance in the consideration of heavier griefs. Of what importance is the slight wound inflicted on thy proud nature, to the disappointment of that toil-worn woman below?" Then he closed the door very gently, and instead of rushing in anger from the house, as his impulses had prompted him to do, he

returned to the poor seamstress, and said: "My mother is sleeping, madam, and not wishing to disturb her, I will be her banker, this morning;" then took from his purse the hard-earned wages of her labor, and placed it kindly in her hands.

"God will bless you for this, sir," she said, rising to go.

"Can you conveniently carry a bottle of wine to the old man, your father, madam? If so, he is heartily welcome; indeed, he must need it—weak, aged, and sick as he is."

"Oh, sir, I believe it would save his life!" she ejaculated; "but I could not have got it for him!" He went into the deserted and silent banqueting-room; the rich morsels of the feast, and the racy fragments, were not removed; there drooped the fading flowers, there flickered one or two decaying lamps, all looking like a sad mockery of earthly enjoyments. He did not, however, pause to moralize, but took a cold chicken from a side-table, which he wrapped in a fine napkin, then snatched an unopened flask of old wine from the sideboard, and returned without delay to the grateful woman, to whom he presented them without a word, while his noble features were suffused with a glow of genuine pleasure; and the pure enjoyment of a good act relieved his heart of the last dregs of bitter feeling.

"Bear ye one another's burdens," is a divine maxim! What is the recompense of the toils of ambition to the sweet consciousness of having caused one heart to beat less heavily under its load of tribulation? What are the adulating praises of the world—what its vain oblations, compared to the blessings which are wafted towards us by dying lips, from the shores of eternity; lips which we have moistened with the dewy balm of mercy? What is the glitter of life, and its fictitious joys, to the beams which encircle our hearts from the glow of the hearth which but for us would have been dark and desolate? Adversity and misery are frightful toads, but bear in their foreheads priceless gems, which we would do well to pluck ere the hour of judgment comes; they are desolate, haunted regions, which only the waters of human kindness can make glad, and where, oh wondrous thing! we can minister to the GOD-MAN, who, under the garb of meek poverty, is ever in our midst. Then scorn not the poor, oh ye sons of earth! for, echoing through the hoary centuries of Time, still comes that plaintive VOICE, in cadences of unutterable sweetness and authority, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto ME."

* * * * *

Mr. Bedford was alone, when Harry De Vere entered his laboratory, poring over an old Chaldee manuscript; but he laid it aside and welcomed him with a cordial air, grasping both hands in his

own, and leading him round to a seat. "Now, Harry!" he exclaimed, "I have received you like a gentleman; but, by Jove, sir, you must submit now to a tribunal of honor where your conduct last night will be impartially judged."

"Innocent of all wilful offence, I demand the accusation, sir," he replied, laughing.

"You take the matter lightly, my fine young sir, as if it were a moral impossibility for you to be found fault with; nevertheless, you are guilty of the charge preferred against you by no less a person than your very humble servant. Oblige the court, by informing it where you hid yourself last night, while I, like a knight-errant, had a most perilous search, perilous to life and limb, for you through those splendid rooms, for the purpose of introducing you to the newly-risen star of my old age, Etha by name. But nowhere could you be found! It was a surly trick, Harry, to be the only gallant of the company who did not offer homage to her charms," said Mr. Bedford, in a mock-heroic tone.

"My dear Mr. Bedford, if I am not predestined to the extremest penalty of the laws of chivalry, hear me plead my cause. Miss Willoughby was so constantly surrounded by worshippers of higher pretensions and fashion than I ever aspired to, that I had not courage to go beyond the charmed circle. I felt that I possessed no quality or attraction which could have ministered to the pleasures of one so beautiful and courted. You know I'm an unpolished fellow, who cannot for the life of me learn the trickeries of fashion, which ladies so much esteem," he replied, coloring up. Mr. Bedford looked keenly at him for an instant, as if he was scrutinizing his most secret thoughts, then smiled and said—

"I believe you, Harry. You can never become an adept in trickery of any kind; and as modesty and a humble opinion of yourself, both rare virtues, form the basis of your defence, you stand exonerated; but it is the opinion of the court that you are intrinsically worth every flutterer in the shape of a well-dressed beau who offered the incense of his brainless admiration to our Etha, last evening. But I must say, if you think Edith Willoughby is one of those artificial, heartless, sentimental girls, who flirt a few years in single blessedness, become unhappy, useless wives, and the mothers of a degenerate race, who will one day bring the republic into trouble—you—are—vastly—mistaken."

"I feared she was like the rest, vain, cold, and proud," burst from Harry De Vere's full heart.

"Cold and proud, and vain, eh? Our Etha cold and vain! What else did you think, De Vere? That she would fall in love with that confounded puppy, who travelled through Europe, and

could remember nothing but the geese livers he ate in Paris, without one grain of Attic salt?—But, God bless my soul—forgive me for alluding to your brother in that sort of a way—'pon my honor, it entirely escaped my memory—the relationship, I mean—" blundered Mr. Bedford.

"My brother, with all his follies!" replied Harry De Vere, gravely.

"You're a noble fellow, Harry!" said Mr. Bedford, warmly; "but this star of my evening, Etha, I'll tell you *what she is*. She's a perfect bird of heaven; a lark that builds her nest low, but is forever flying up towards the sunshine. Her heart is like a lily, pure, and filled with sweet odors,* which its golden flame burns like incense. She understands not the guile of the world; and what you mistook for *pride* is only the native and beautiful dignity of her manner. But you will, doubtless, think I am a doting old fool—so come, my Archimedes, unroll your diagrams!"

"Of such an one have I dreamed—but it is all a dream!" thought he, as he unrolled his papers, and explained, in a lucid, clear style, the complex drawings which illustrated the concerted influence of the action of levers, wheels, pulleys, inclined planes, wedges, and the screw, in their several relations to his improvement or invention. It was evidently the embodiment of the bold and original ideas of a true genius, certain of the success of his plan.

"This will certainly produce a new era in this age of steam. Although I do not exactly comprehend its details, I see that its success will be complete. Its effects are of too apparent a nature to be overlooked. You must let me send these drawings to my friend Beverly, at Washington. He is the friend of progress, and a practical utilitarian, whose position will enable him to introduce your plan immediately to the notice of government," observed Mr. Bedford.

"As I have a neat model just completed, whose operations surpass my most sanguine hopes of success, I cannot object to your proposition, my dear sir; indeed, I frankly confess, it is peculiarly grateful to me!" he replied, highly gratified at Mr. Bedford's appreciation of his invention.

"It's ten thousand pities, De Vere, that your genius is not for astronomy, instead of mechanism and steam, though," said Mr. Bedford, in a tone of disappointment, after a short silence. "I believe you would have added another to the brilliant galaxy of names, which shine, like constellated suns, on the zodiac of the celestial science!"

* The cup of the white lily is filled with gold-colored dust.

"All honor to the science sublime!" said Harry De Vere, rising, while the spirit within him flashed forth a wild brilliance from his eyes; "but give me that POWER over whose birth the ancients shouted *eureka*, and compared with whose Titan growth the inventions of all ages shrink into nothingness. Its iron sinews lace the fabric of the world together, and the breath of its nostrils annihilates time and space, while, with a shout of derision, it levels mountains and fills up the valleys! That POWER which rules on the ocean, effects the wedlock of nations, and fraternizes mankind in one bond of interest! When the names of Thales, Pythagoras, Confucius, Ptolemy, Hesiod, and the rest, are more than half forgotten, those of Fulton, Greenock, and their supporters, will be in the meridian of a fadeless glory! Archimedes had indistinct visions of it, when his mighty soul sighed for a spot whereon to stand, that he might move the world; but steam is a mightier power than Archimedes, and will ere long, Atlas-like, bear the universe on its shoulders!"

"I hope the engineer will be careful, Harry, or some of these fine nights it will be blown to atoms, and we with it," exclaimed Mr. Bedford, admiring while he laughed at his enthusiasm; "but, shades of Seth* and Newton, the *apogee* and *perigee* of *ma belle science*, defend us from such odious comparisons—such arch-heterodoxy! Well, boy, if steam works out a noble destiny for you, I won't quarrel with it. If you had been a scavenger, on my honor, I believe you would have dignified the occupation."

"After the fashion of the model days of old—eh, Mr. Bedford?"

"Yes, precisely so, sir. You remember Epaminondas the Theban, and his noble reply to his indignant friends, who remonstrated with him on what they considered his degrading acceptance of the office of *telearch*† of Thebes, which certain idiots in authority had forced on him, after his celebrated victory over the Spartans. *'I will demonstrate that the office not only shows what the man is, but also the man what the office is!'* And true to his word, and great character, he raised it from insignificance to high dignity."

"A noble soul, that, which can bear adversity with dignified firmness, and rise superior to its depressing contingencies!" exclaimed Harry De Vere, warmly.

"Truly noble! I tell you, Harry De Vere, that he whose position is only sustained and rendered brilliant by the advantages of

* Josephus tells us that Seth, the son of Adam, laid the first foundation of the science of astronomy.

† The business of a telearch was to take care of the streets, and overlook the cleansing of sewers and drains.

birth, office, or fortune, is the mere slave of circumstances—an actor, tricked off with tinsel and spangles, whose glitter charms the eye of the crowd, but who, stripped of these, behind the scenes, has not one ennobling virtue, or excellent trait, to demand respect or esteem. A virtuous ancestry is a glory to any man, if he emulate their pure lives and brave deeds; but if, on the contrary, he trails, like a dried bladder filled with peas, to the fag end of his lineage, rattling forth his unsubstantial pretensions to the world, how supremely ridiculous becomes the contrast! Give me the man who, from the anvil, or the plough, comes forth in the native dignity of a pure character, of a persevering and aspiring genius, to found for himself a name, and for posterity an example;—give me the man, sir, whose sentiments of honor and generosity, whose tried integrity and substantial worth, give dignity to even the tattered garb of poverty;—show me these, and I will show you spirits worthy of the sublime end for which they are created, and who are the strongest and noblest bulwarks of the republic!" said Mr. Bedford.

"Such is my sole ambition!" observed Harry De Vere, whose eyes and cheeks had kindled with the warm glow of hope, while Mr. Bedford gave utterance to sentiments so ennobling, and so expressive of his own ideas.

"Such are you, boy—such will you be!" exclaimed Mr. Bedford, grasping his hand.

De Vere was silent! His heart was full. His mind lustrous with visions of the future! His destiny was opened before him by the seer-like prophecy of age. He felt, more than ever, that his progress must be upward henceforth; that to GOD, the GIVER, he was responsible for the cultivation of his natural gifts, and to man for the use to which they were applied, socially and otherwise. The whisperings of all petty ambitious and worldly regrets were hushed into silence by the lofty view; the smarting of his sensitive spirit forgotten, in the overshadowing idea of some day reaching a height of excellence so lofty as to be but little lower than the angels.

"Harry!"

"Pardon me—I was thinking—"

"So I perceive; and regretting, may-be, that you are not a poet or musician," said Mr. Bedford, pleasantly.

"Not at that moment, my dear sir, though I plead guilty to coveting those refined and beautiful gifts sometimes," he replied, rousing himself from his dream.

"Well, Harry, when you feel tempted to make such a vain wish again, remember that neither music nor poetry elevated the

moral qualities of Dionysius or Nero, who excelled in both. But see," said Mr. Bedford, "here are some season tickets for Mrs. Willoughby's *soirées*. She sent them to me for distribution among my chosen friends. You are one—take it, and give me a rendezvous at nine o'clock next Thursday evening, in Chiswicke Square, when I will introduce you to——the lady of Woodreve."

"Thank you, thank you; but I believe I have almost made a vow against these fashionable *réunions*. The artificial and hypocritical distinctions which exist in society, and its heartless conventional rules, quite throw me off my balance. I cannot get along with them at all."

"I have frequently heard it asserted that all gifted minds labor under the influence of a monomania of some description or other—I believe it now, however incredulous I may have been heretofore. Many evils exist in society—*that* cannot be denied; but, because a few wear the caps and bells and livery of a fool, is that any rule, prithee, to judge the whole world by? or any reason why you should fly off in a tangent from all social and rational intercourse with your intellectual peers? Fie on you, De Vere, for a misanthrope; go to the cooper, over the way, and order a tub, then off with you at once to the woods," said Mr. Bedford.

"I will be there without fail," he replied, laughing, as he took up his hat to go; "until then, adieu, my kind adviser and friend."

"Compliment me by saying 'mentor' at once, Harry; there, be off now," said Mr. Bedford, settling himself in his chair and resuming his Chaldee manuscript.

While De Vere paused a moment on the stone step at the door to adjust the folds of his cloak, an event that appeared to be the mere result of a combination of incidental trifles occurred which gave a coloring and wielded an influence over his whole future life. A troop of soldiers from a neighboring garrison were marching through the street, and, as they approached nearly opposite Mr. Bedford's mansion, the band struck up a grand martial air, frightening a horse, that was fastened by the bridle to a post on the side-walk, so dreadfully that it reared suddenly, and with one wild plunge leaped on the pavement, just as Edith Willoughby, who was on her way to visit Mr. Bedford, reached the spot. To throw off his cloak, spring forward and lift her half fainting in his arms, just as the terrified animal was in the act of bounding towards her, was the work of a minute; then without pausing he bore her

tenderly up the broad staircase to Mr. Bedford's laboratory, and without speaking laid her insensible form on the sofa.

"What have we here!" exclaimed the astonished old man, throwing aside the Chaldaic manuscript once more, and leaping from his chair. "God bless my soul! Etha—darling—Harry! What is the matter with her, De Vere? Call Mrs. Grimshaw—Etha!—How pale she is! why don't she speak? Here, chafe her hands, while I get down the *sal volatile.*"

If Harry De Vere had thought her beautiful in the full radiance of life, how touchingly lovely did she now appear, with the paleness of death overspreading those faultless features, relieved only by the dark shadows of her hair, and the black silken fringes of the blue-veined eyelids, which lay so softly on her cheeks! He untied the strings of her bonnet to give her air, and was timidly lifting her hand in his to draw her glove, when Mr. Bedford returned with a large glass jar of *sal volatile*, which he uncovered, and opened its powerful battery on her. Its effects were instantaneous—she gasped—opened her eyes languidly, and raised them with a soft, half-dreamy glance to De Vere's—there they rested with a pleased but wondering expression for a short space; then a warm rose hue mantled her cheeks—she remembered all—and drew her hand away, and held it out to Mr. Bedford, who hung anxiously over her, while a burst of tears relieved her overstrained nerves. He folded it within his own, and, almost wild with joy at her recovery, pressed it to his cheek and lips, while he directed Harry to fetch water, wine, and Mrs. Grimshaw; after which he was to go for a physician and Mrs. Willoughby. He was quite ready to perform each of the tasks assigned him; but Edith observed to Mr. Bedford: "Indeed, I am quite recovered; pray, don't send—it will alarm mamma unnecessarily—I am perfectly well now—I was terribly frightened, nothing more."

"The deuce you were! and at what, Etha? Was it that confounded elephant they are walking past here every day?"

"No; a horse became frightened at the martial music of a troop of soldiers who were going by, and had like to run over me. My thanks are due, my warm thanks, to the gentleman who was here a moment ago; but I remember nothing except the glaring eyes, and the uplifted hoofs of the horse," she replied, covering her face with her hands.

"That's Harry—holloa! where is he? Just like him; the proudest, shyest rascal living. But you are right; he saved your life, Etha. Never mind—don't talk—I'll ring for wine, child; you must and shall take some," said Mr. Bedford, while an expression, that Edith could not understand, flitted across his face.

"Wheeler is out, Mr. Bedford!" said Mrs. Grimshaw without; "what will you please to have, sir? I hope as it's something I can do for you without coming in, being as I'm afeard of the combustious contrivances there."

"Certainly, my good Mrs. Grimshaw, I would not allow you to expose yourself to such peril for the world; bring me up a flask of that number 10, and wineglasses. I will meet you at the door and take them in," said Mr. Bedford, with a quiet smile. "If Mrs. Grimshaw were once to get in here with her brooms and dusters, I should be a ruined man!"

"I have half a mind to betray you to Mrs. Grimshaw!" said Edith, laughing.

"You dare not, you jade; but tell me, Etha, how happens it that you are stirring so early to-day? Are you already accustomed to the wear and tear of fashionable hours? But, I forgot, you womenkind are instinctively adapted to the demands and usages of fashion," said Mr. Bedford, resuming his seat beside her.

"A cynical speech, truly! but I will keep my temper, and try to give a rational account of myself, notwithstanding," she replied, kissing his cheek, and laughing. "We, mamma and I, retired precisely at five, and slept until twelve to-day; and you must allow, most grave and reverend seignior, that seven hours' uninterrupted repose is quite enough; then we breakfasted, after which we made our toilet for the day, and *belle mère* proposed a walk. After walking an hour, she mentioned her intention of calling to see Mrs. Lacy. She was there late yesterday afternoon, and I am very sure their interview to-day will be productive of good to Mrs. Lacy, in some way. You smile; but I have learned from you the art of reading countenances; and I always know, from a certain radiant, uplifted expression which makes mamma's sometimes so beautiful, when she is performing in her secret, peculiar way, a good work. So we separated at the head of this famous street, which seems to be turned into a *menagerie*, and, in hopes of catching you napping, that I might win a pair of gloves, I was on my way hither, when that Mazeppa of a horse baffled all my finely-laid plans. This is all."

"No, Etha!" said Mr. Bedford, shaking his head, gravely; "you little hypocrite! *not all.* I know you are dying to know who that dark-eyed hero is who rescued you!"

"Oh—no—!" she replied, with a heightened color; "your sagacity is a little at fault. I saw him last night at Mrs. De Vere's, and have come to the very rational conclusion that he must be a gloomy creature, a Byronic genius, who would rather indulge in fine, frenzied reveries, than in social and harmless enjoyments.

He has now fairly run from me twice, and as we '*womenkind*' have a little proper pride mixed up with our follies, I will not even ask his name. Courtesy and gratitude would have led me to thank him sincerely for his chivalrous rescue, had he remained; but you will do it for me, will you not?"

"I see you are fairly piqued, Etha; piqued, beyond doubt. Well! I will not affront you by naming this 'knight of the rueful countenance,'" said Mr. Bedford, gayly; "I will only declare, in the most positive terms, that he is *not* a poet; and that he *is* one of the very—but never mind, did you say Miriam had gone to Mrs. Lacy's again?"

"Yes!"

"I am glad of it. They are kindred souls, though each has a different harmony of its own, and they will accord sweetly together."

"Mr. Bedford!" said a voice at the door.

"Mrs. Grimshaw!"

"The wine, sir, and a few sandwiches, and crumpets, if you please!"

"Open *sesame!*" said Mr. Bedford, throwing wide open the door; "enter, thou envoy of the *penate* of the pantry—enter!"

But Mrs. Grimshaw drew back with a frightened air, as she caught a full view of the batteries and retorts within; and courtesied respectfully while she held the silver waiter, that was loaded with dainties, at arm's-length towards Mr. Bedford, who stood near the threshold. "Indeed, then, sir, I can't come no further; and, saving your presence, I must say that it is a dreadful thing for a human Christian to be a tempting of Providence in such a way. I'd do anything to serve you, sir; but please don't order me again to come in, for that's an unpossibility! And Lord!" she screamed, catching a glimpse of Edith, "if there ain't Miss Etha! Do come out, my dear miss; you might as well be a sitting on a loaded cannon. Here, sir, please to take the waiter, or I shall let it fall. Wheeler's forever out o' the way when he's wanting!"

"Mrs. Grimshaw, had you been Lot's wife, there would not, at this moment, be a pillar of salt on the shores of the Dead Sea," said her tormentor, advancing a step or two; "I cannot sufficiently admire your prudence. There is, on my veracity, enough bottled lightning in this room to kill five hundred men, ay, and five hundred women in the bargain. All those engines are loaded with it!" He took the waiter from her; she paused to hear not another word, but rushed towards the staircase and performed a feat of agility that no one would have thought her capable of, by clearing three steps at a time, flying leaps, in her descent towards her own safe sanctuary on the first floor.

"It is too bad, Mr. Bedford, to trifle with Mrs. Grimshaw's nerves in this way!" observed Edith, who could not help being diverted by the scene.

"My dear, you know nothing about the matter! I can keep no other terms with her. If I were to let her in, with the assurance that all this was harmless, her curiosity would forthwith commence explorations among my apparatus, which would end in serious injury, may-be death. Eve and Bluebeard's wife, Etha, are beacons to me. Eat another sandwich!" said Mr. Bedford, offering her one.

"No, thou libeller of my sex, I will break no more bread beneath this roof until you ask pardon and do penance for all the atrocious hints you have insinuated against us to-day. Good-by," said Edith, rising with a serio-comic air, and drawing on her glove.

"Simpleton; anger on disputed points invariably argues a bad cause. Sit down. Your airs have not at all convinced me that women have not a vast amount of curiosity—you especially. But we'll settle this momentous question at some future time," he replied.

"It is unbearable," laughed Edith. "I cannot offend my dignity by remaining longer. I hope yet to see you mated with a shrew."

"Begone, you baggage!" he exclaimed, as she stood smiling at him through the open door. "And take care, Etha, of accidents; for Harry De ——, that individual who rescued you an hour ago, is not here now;—but stop, I'd better go with you." He turned to get his hat, but she was gone; and laughing, while he rubbed his hands together, he shook his head significantly; then arranged his spectacles on his nose, and was soon buried in the profundities of Chaldean lore.

Edith gave a brief account of her adventure to her step-mother, who remarked: "It was certainly a noble act, and could have been prompted only by a brave and unselfish spirit; but I must confess, dear, that it was not only awkward but uncourteous, under existing circumstances, for the gentleman, after rendering you such timely service, to hurry off as he did. I cannot conceive who he is; but, whoever he is, he is entitled to our gratitude. Walter is just gone; and here is a French novel he left for you. I glanced over its pages, and judge it is very sentimental; but it is the fashion, and I presume you will read it?"

"Not merely because *it is* the fashion, mamma; but, as Mr. Shirley was good enough to bring it, I will run through it, in some hour of idleness. Sentimental enough I expect it is. Commend

me to a French novelist for dramatic effect—a mingling of bathos and pathos, and an undercurrent of vile morality. I do not much fancy them," said Edith, as she turned over the pages of the book. But, after this, she was silent. The book lay unopened on her knee for hours, while she sat, her elbow leaning on a table, and her chin resting on the palm of her hand, as if a spell of silence had fixed her there immovably. At dinner, she scarcely tasted the rich viands before her, and only replied to Mrs. Willoughby's questions when they interrupted her strange mood. Mrs. Willoughby retired to her apartment when the meal was over, and Edith returned alone to the drawing-room, which, silent and darkened, harmonized well with her feelings. A dreamy mist floated around her heart, veiling the outer world from its vision, and circumscribing its thoughts to the being who had saved her life, and then fled her presence. She saw again and again the dark, earnest eyes which, amidst the splendor and glare at Mrs. De Vere's, had fixed their searching gaze on her until her heart thrilled beneath it—of the cold, proud look with which he had moved away from her presence in the Persian conservatory—the touching tenderness of his expressive face as he leaned over her at Mr. Bedford's, and which was so instantly changed the moment she recovered her consciousness. It was all a mystery she would fain have solved, but the labyrinth presented no clue; so she could only wonder, in silence, at his strange inconsistencies, and his evident repugnance to her society. "He thinks me vain and frivolous. But why should it concern me what he, a passing stranger, thinks? I think him proud and selfish." With this conclusion, however, she was not satisfied; for, like a half-remembered tune, that haunts the very echoes of the heart in repeated reverberations, she turned again and again to the same reflections, until, feverish and sad, she determined to forget it all; and, opening her piano, she ran over the chords with astonishing brilliancy, and played her favorite songs with such deep expression, that the whole house echoed with melody. But music was no remedy for the spell; it only increased its power; and, wearied with her efforts, she arose from the instrument, and searched for the novel she had so listlessly thrown aside, until, finding it under a pile of music, she threw herself on a lounge, and was soon, apparently, deeply absorbed in its pages. Mrs. Willoughby came in soon after, and as Edith did not lift her eyes, she did not address her; but, sitting where she had a full view of her face, she watched every change that passed over it with a keen, penetrating glance. She had studied too long the varied expressions of that radiant countenance, not to be aware that some perplexing thoughts now sad-

dened it; but the shadow fell lightly, so lightly that only she would have observed it. She obtruded no remark, asked no question; but she *felt intuitively* that the romantic incident of the morning was connected with it. She knew Edith's enthusiastic nature—she knew how that fresh, earnest heart was capable of loving, and she trembled lest it might some day be chilled as her own had been. Then loomed through the pale, shadowy past, the fountain of Hecuba on her memory, and her blighted love; and she determined to save Edith; to discover the snare, and, as far as her influence could be exerted, shelter her from its evil results.

CHAPTER XI.

"Are ye doin' ought weel? Are ye thrivin', my man?
Be thankfu' to fortune for a' that she sen's ye;
Ye'll ha'e plenty o' frien's aye to offer their han',
When ye need na their countenance—a' body kens ye.
But think na I mean that a' mankind are sae,
It's the butterfly frien's that misfortune should fear aye;
There are those worth the name—gude sen' there were mae,
Wha the colder the blast, aye the closer draw near ye.

WHISTLE BINKIE.

"HE is not a marrying man!" was Mr. Bedford's provoking answer to Mrs. Willoughby's inquiries about Edith's preserver.

"But he has a name?" she suggested.

"He is my friend, Miriam—my cherished friend."

"And why should he not be mine? You are selfish, Mr. Bedford!"

"Um—um—um. May-be," he replied, polishing up the lens of a telescope with a piece of soft kid. He knew Mrs. Willoughby's opinion of the De Veres. She had not exactly said that she thought them vulgar and weak, but he was confident, from one or two expressions he had heard her let fall, that she had settled the question decisively against them. And it was a cunning, deep-laid scheme of Mr. Bedford's not to allow Harry's name to transpire, lest foregone conclusions should injure him in her estimation. He determined to introduce him under an incognito to Mrs. Willoughby, at her approaching *soirée*, when he believed that her discriminating eye would detect, at once, under his modest and dignified demeanor, the splendid genius and noble

worth of his character. This would overshadow the associations connected with the name of De Vere, in her mind, and the triumph of his favorite would be complete. He would become one of them—a chosen friend of the home circle; but as to Edith—or love—or marriage—it never entered his calculations.

"Mysterious, also," said Mrs. Willoughby, smiling; "but, my dear Mr. Bedford, my inquiries are not prompted by mere curiosity. This stranger has laid us under an important obligation, which demands, at least, a courteous acknowledgment from me, as Edith's guardian. If then his name is not an interdicted sound to ears polite, be kind enough to favor me with it!"

"What—who? Harry—I like to have let it out! Women certainly understand the art of provoking one. But you are right, Miriam—the name of my young friend *is* interdicted just now; but trust me, for reasons of my own, which do not reflect on him, except in the most honorable way. I can premise this, however. In the course of a day or two, an opportunity will present itself highly auspicious to your grateful intentions. How is Etha?"

"That arrangement will answer. As it regards Edith, at the risk of being thought romantic, truth compels me to say that her fine spirits are much impaired. Recently, she has been more silent and thoughtful than I have ever seen her, and I date the change from the day of her adventure. The shocking fright possibly unnerved her; but she is decidedly drooping, whatever the cause may be," said Mrs. Willoughby.

"But she goes out every evening! I hear of her being everywhere," he observed.

"Yes, but it is very evident to me, Mr. Bedford, that mere amusement is not her object in attending these numerous entertainments. At first there is an overstrained, unnatural gayety, which flags in an hour or two; then she becomes dispirited, and retires from them pale and silent. I am confident, there is some bright dream of her imagination unrealized, or some hope disappointed."

"Ask her," said Mr. Bedford, rubbing the lens until it became heated beneath the friction.

"No. At least not yet; confidence, to be perfect, must be voluntary. I love Edith too fondly to wound her delicate nature by an exhibition of suspicions which, after all, may be the result of my own fancies. But I have an engagement; do not forget yours to-morrow evening in Chiswicke Square; until then, good-by," she said, rising to go. Mr. Bedford attended her to her carriage, and returned with a puzzled, thoughtful countenance, and flung himself in his great arm-chair, muttering, "I might have foreseen it! I am an old fool. There will be trouble in the wigwam yet

about it. I wish that confounded company of soldiers had been in Mexico, with the old hero-leader, Taylor; I wish that devil of a horse had been fastened to some plough-tail in Asia Minor; I wish Edith had gone to Mrs. Lacy's. Deuce take it all—um—um—um!"

And Edith! Piqued as she felt by the stranger's haughty coldness, there was a charm in its very novelty that gave birth to a thousand fancies; some pleasing, and others foreshadowing sadness. In him, she saw the lofty *beau-idéal* of her imagination—the strong and beautiful image of strength and truth her mind had ever aspired to; and had read, in his fugitive glances, that spirit of manly tenderness, which bears gently with the failings of what it loves, until, by soothing influences, it elevates it to its own standard of excellence. "But oh," she thought, "such pride! Was it that he thought her unworthy of a passing thought or word, or that circumstances of fallen fortune, or poverty through which he might be bravely struggling upwards, kept him aloof from her, whose wealth and position made her the first match in the land? Yes, it must be so; would, then, that her estate had been more lowly! He could not be otherwise than truly noble in his nature—his being Mr. Bedford's friend proved that—but she would forget him. Memory only strengthened the spell; pride—her womanly dignity, must make her forget him." These were the musings of her untried, innermost heart. Little dreamed she they were the first dawnings of a love, destined to rend its fibres almost to the separation of soul and body.

And bravely she tried to forget! Twice only had she seen him since the eventful morning at Mr. Bedford's. Once, at the theatre, she caught a glimpse of his noble head, and the outline of his high, finely-cut features—but it was only for a moment. The crowd swayed to and fro, and intercepted her view; and once, she was stepping from the carriage to make a morning call at Mrs. De Vere's, when he came out—paused an instant on the portico—bowed, and went his way. His salutation was respectful, but cold; hers a proud arching of the neck, and a slight inclination of her beautiful head. "Doubtless," she thought, "he is a friend of the De Veres—perhaps a lover of Bessie's! Oh that I could recall my wasted thoughts! But hereafter we will meet in society; when I will prove, by my manner, how utterly indifferent he is to me." But her fine plan was frustrated. She did not meet him in society.

Walter Shirley was ever by her side; and she, soothed by the fascination of his manner, and unconscious of his designs, received his lavish attentions without coldness or displeasure. Then it

was whispered that they were betrothed, and no one could contradict it. Their intimacy too tacitly confirmed the report, and the world only nodded its wise head approvingly, and said, "An excellent match. Eligible in every respect. I predicted it from the first."

It was the evening of Mrs. Willoughby's first *soirée*. A suite of four elegantly furnished rooms were thrown open. These were only separated from each other by ranges of polished marble pillars, between which hung superb draperies of chocolate and gold-colored damask, which were drawn back by heavy ropes of twisted silk and gold. Cold restraint and heartless formality were banished from a scene enriched by every association that beauty, talent, and fashion could gather around it. Mrs. Willoughby understood well the rare art of entertaining guests agreeably, without overpowering them with the idea that she was taking an infinite deal of trouble on their account. With well-bred tact, she allowed them to enjoy their evening in the manner most agreeable to themselves, moving among them at intervals with the affable and courteous air which was at all times peculiar to her, to see that none were neglected or overlooked. The dancing had not commenced, but, chiming above the gay buzz of conversation, and the low, sweet laughter that welled up from joyous hearts, the silvery notes of a musical box, which Edith had placed in a flower-stand, where it was concealed by the broad clustering leaves, were heard, like fairy melodies. In conspicuous places, between candelabras which supported wax-lights, hung Masoletti's paintings of the chapel of Soleure, and the night-scene on the Roman Campagna, in rich frames of dead gilt, of an antique pattern, about which Edith had twined clustering leaves of ivy, whose dark green threw out still brighter their warm hues and deep-toned shadows. A few pastile lamps, in alabaster shades, threw up their vapory incense from niches, filled with blooming and gracefully arranged flowers.

Two gray-headed negro footmen, in the white and blue livery of the Shirleys, were in attendance, wearing on their well-trained countenances a look of stately importance, as they dispensed refreshments to the assemblage from their richly-loaded waiters. Higher swelled the festal strains; dancing, thrilling music, softly-beaming eyes, light, and the aroma of many-hued flowers, with whispered words that only *one* might hear, and intellectual converse, blended their fascinations into one beautiful and delicious harmony, whose influence all acknowledged.

Edith, in a pale blue silk and pearl ornaments, looked surpassingly lovely. A sparkling, but fitful gayety, imparted to her dark eyes a wilder brilliance, only shadowed by a downcast look

of disappointment, as guest after guest entered, and they rested not on the expected one. "I pray Heaven!" thought Mrs. Willoughby, who had observed her narrowly, "this illusion may soon be dispelled."

It was late when Mr. Bedford, accompanied by Harry De Vere, came in. Mrs. Willoughby was deeply interested, at the moment, by the conversation of a celebrated traveller present, who had spent the greater part of his life in Egypt and Syria; and although she received their compliments with courtesy, and themselves cordially, she did not understand, nay, even hear the name of his companion.

"I will only ask you where I can find Edith—aha! I see her. Here are some fine engravings, Harry; look over them; I will return presently," said Mr. Bedford, moving off. Harry De Vere felt quite at his ease; he was devoted to pictures, and especially rare engravings, and began to turn them over, when Mrs. Willoughby, seeing at once that he was a stranger to those about him, stepped towards him, and directed his attention to several of the finest in the collection; and, while his face became illuminated with an expression of refined intellectuality, her penetrating eye discerned that his mind was cast in no common mould. "Here is a sunset view of the hill of the Areopagus, at Athens; another of the ruins of Ephesus; and here are a few scenes on the classic shores of the Ægean. While you examine these, which I see you do with an artist's eye, I will resume my conversation with Mr. Gray, the antiquarian. After which, it will afford me pleasure to introduce you to Miss Willoughby, and my guests."

"It will cost me but little, madam, to wait patiently, with such a temptation as this to enchain my thoughts," replied he, with his usual simple frankness. "God, how beautiful!" he exclaimed, in a low tone of rapture, as he held up to the light an exquisitely colored view of the isles of the Cyclades, and the distant shores of Greece, all bathed in the gorgeous and lambent hues of an atmosphere through whose transparent veil the morning sun floated down.

"Oblige me, Mr. Gray, by continuing your most interesting description," she said, resuming her place beside the Egyptian traveller; "the agreeable duties of hospitality are sometimes obliged to supersede the delightful enjoyments of intellectuality."

But Mr. Gray was afflicted with a peculiarity that not only annoyed himself, but his listeners. Frequently, in the midst of the most interesting narrative, necessary interruptions would occur, as in the present instance, when he would entirely lose the thread of his subject. It was an idiosyncrasy, or the result of habit; and, notwithstanding all his efforts to conquer it, it still retained its

ascendency over him. He rubbed his hands, and squeezed them until the joints complained, in audible explosions; struck his forehead, snapped his finger and thumb together, until one might have fancied that champagne bottles were popping off their corks, and stamped his foot; but all to no purpose.

"I cannot go on, my dear madam; I have entirely forgotten the precise idea I stopped with," he said, good-naturedly.

"You were speaking of the Pharaohs of Egypt," suggested Mrs. Willoughby.

"Yes—yes. I remember, also, the brightening up of a pair of fine eyes, which were fixed intently on me at the time. I thought, then, 'he is a good listener; he understands every word one utters.' Then followed the greeting between you and your venerable friend, madam; but, by Cheops, there are the eyes," he exclaimed, as Harry De Vere turned his face full round to ascertain the cause of the strange sounds he heard. "Honor me, sir, a moment. You can put me on the trail of a lost idea, I know. When you entered this presence, was I in the skull of a Pharaoh—on the tail of an Asp—was I worshipping an Ibis—or had I Apis by his golden horns—or was I paddling some mummied potentate over the Lethean Lake, to be judged by his peers on a Plutonian shore? It was some one of these, I fancy."

Thus adjured, Harry De Vere, diverted by the quaint manner of the traveller, came nearer; and while many a bright expectant eye fixed its glances on him, he replied, with a grace of manner which won Mrs. Willoughby's admiration and Mr. Gray's gratitude: "I unfortunately heard only a word or two. We were standing only a few moments beside you, my dear sir; but I think it was of Thmè, in her double capacity of justice and truth, you were speaking of at the time."

"That is the very thing," he exclaimed, seizing his kind prompter by the hand—"the very idea, Thmè. Now I can go on." And eloquently and well he talked of the antiquities of this mysterious race, relating many curious facts relative to their mythology, their priesthood, their hieroglyphics, architecture, and sciences. He addressed himself repeatedly to De Vere, with whom the subject happened to be a favorite one, and who was so deeply interested by the antiquarian's graphic and lucid description, and, unconsciously to himself, placed so much at his ease by the absence of the usual haughty pretensions he had met with in fashionable society the few times he had ventured within its charmed influence, that his *mauvaise honte* was dispelled; and when Mr. Bedford returned, he was engaged in an animated conversation with Mrs. Willoughby and Mr. Gray; while several gen-

tlemen, eminent for their talents, joined the circle, and listened to his opinions with respect and smiles of approval. "It is young De Vere," whispered one. "He is quite a genius, and highly intellectual," replied another. "So he is," said a third. "I have frequently wished to meet him; but he is almost inaccessible except to his intimates, some of whom I know well."

"I will introduce you, gentlemen. I am proud to declare he is *my* friend," said Mr. Bedford, chuckling at the success of his plan. A moment's pause here occurred, and, stepping forward, he named De Vere to Mrs. Willoughby as the preserver of her step-daughter. Thanks and compliments succeeded; and then came the old man of the sea, in the shape of the terrible *mauvaise honte*, to overshadow the uproaring of his heart, and his replies were awkward and cold; and, while a flush of crimson mounted to his face, he felt that Mr. Bedford had taken an unfair advantage of him. If Mrs. Willoughby was astonished at the *denouement*, she was more than pleased with her new guest; who was so utterly unlike the young men she had usually met with in town during the season, that she felt desirous not only of cultivating a further acquaintance with him, but adding him, at some future time, to the select list of her friends. She was called away to another room just then. De Vere felt, he could not tell why, that her absence was a relief; and finding himself surrounded by congenial spirits—men who appreciated his talents, and treated him with that unreserve and respectful kindness his noble nature deserved—he emerged once more from the cloud, and charmed them not more by his brilliant originality than his modest dignity of manner. And there was Walter Shirley. Never losing sight of Edith, he, whenever an opportunity occurred, whispered his homage in the most fascinating language; looking sad when conscious her eye was on him, and only seeming happy while conversing with her. And yet this was blended with such deferential tenderness, and so subtly done, that a mere casual observer would scarcely have remarked anything peculiar in his attentions to her.

"Did you read the new work I left some days ago for you, Miss Willoughby?" he asked, while she paused a moment to speak to him.

"I glanced over it. I did not altogether like its tone," replied the frank-hearted girl.

"You think Hortense loved unworthily, perhaps?" he observed.

"I think her a most unnatural character."

"But," he continued, offering her his arm, and leading her to an apartment comparatively deserted, "think you not, Edith, that a love which could so dare all—so sacrifice all for its object—

which could cling to it, like a guardian angel, through coldness, neglect, and infamy—which could *hope* in its endurance, until, by its patient strength, it raised up tenderly—up, up, to the level of its own purity, the being for whom it had agonized? Is not this holy, is not this elevating? What the sun is to the universe, is the devotion of a kindred spirit to the sterile heart of man; without it, it is a cold, pathless desert, where blooms no flower, whence gushes no sweet spring."

"But," said Edith, smiling sadly, "Madame de Staël says, 'that love is a mere episode in the life of man.' How can you reconcile the paradox?"

"By declaring she knew her own sex better than ours, when she affirms that 'love is a woman's lifetime.' She may have experienced the brief episode to her sorrow; but men, Edith, love more constantly than women—more truly, more fervently, believe me. But you evaded completely my proposition about the *quality of love*," he said.

"Well. Truly, I am a poor sciolist in the mysteries of the heart, Walter. Like many others, I indulge only in hypothesis; but I fancy that a heart cannot be very pure which can mingle its affinities with a polluted object. It does well enough, though, in novels," she replied.

"Ah, sweet Edith! forget not that she who too coldly shines in her own purity cannot understand how blessed a thing it is to forgive error—how divine a sentiment it is to pardon the wanderings of an o'er-tempted soul—

> 'Too shocked at faults her soul can never know,
> She deems that all can be like her below;
> Foe to all vice, yet scarcely Virtue's friend,
> For Virtue pardons those she would befriend.'"
>
> BYRON.

he murmured, softly.

"That is overstrained, I fear. There are but few, I trust, so proud and pharisaical in their natures as to establish so selfish a code to judge human kind by. But I cannot argue, Walter. I can only reason with my own heart and feelings; and should they ever lead me into errors of judgment, then may kind Heaven send me a more infallible monitor!" said Edith, in an earnest tone.

"Will you sing for me to-night?" he asked, after regarding the uplifted expression of her beautiful countenance with feelings he could scarcely define. "Sing for me, Edith. I have heard nothing to touch my heart. It has been all too gay, too senseless. Sing me, then, one of those sweet, sad strains which only you can sing with the pathos and expression they breathe." And his eyes,

half-veiled by their drooping lids, rested on her—looked deep down into the shining depths of hers, until, softly and tenderly, the emotions of his heart seemed transfused by their influence into hers. There is an awful power in the human eye. A gleaming forth of an eternal, subtle essence, which, more or less potent in its control, fascinates the unwary, spreads its luminous tissues like a web around the will, and governs the ebbing of the human heart, as the moon influences the rising and falling of the ocean tides. By a wily art of transfusion, it obtains a demoniac power over the faculties of the soul, leading them captive to its strange caprices, and winning away from Heaven its allegiance, until, wasted and imbecile, it clings like a helpless parasite to the human will which has subdued it. For a moment, the noble heart of Edith Willoughby quailed and fluttered like a bird that the serpent charms; she felt the dawning of a strange life within her. Then came a soft whisper, chiming, like a syren's note, that forgiving and loving were divine—that she alone could recall the wandering soul beside her to the path of its true, high destiny. The bloom faded from her cheeks, but her face, transparent in its pure whiteness, was wondrously beautiful.

"Like a star amidst the tempest or dew in the desert, your very presence gladdens my being! Weary and sad, I turn to you, beloved, and all is peace; the air brightens around me; the gloom of the past is forgotten. Come, sing for me that song, Edith, which tells of one who worshipped in secret the lady of his heart, and

> 'Watched her in the festive hall,
> And trembled when she moved,
> But softly though his accents fell,
> He never said he loved.'"

Thus he murmured, as he took her unresisting hand in his with a gentle pressure, and led her to her harp. She played with a rare and expressive touch the plaintive prelude; and while her heart still dreamed its wild visions, a calm serenity settled on her countenance, while her eyes beamed with soft lustre, and wore an expression as if they were gazing through earthly mists into a rapt and glorious future. Walter Shirley, leaning with folded arms against a pillar near her, watched her every movement, and still turned his dark-bright eyes forever on hers. Won by the ringing harp-strings and wildly plaintive cadences of her voice, a silent group had gathered around her to listen, and she was trilling the notes of the second verse, when Mr. Bedford and Harry De Vere approached. Like a good angel to the tempted soul he

came; the evil charm was broken by a pause; the rosy hue of life suffused her cheeks once more; her voice faltered an instant; then with a smile of recognition she greeted him. With proud grace he bowed; his outward seeming was calm, but every heart-chord had throbbed so wildly responsive to that smile, he drew back, more into the shade of a window near him, fearing his countenance might betray emotions he wished to conceal. And Edith never sang so sweetly; never chanted forth her spirit in such exquisite echoes, never soared it so wildly upwards in music as now! She knew *he* listened, she saw him standing near her, listening almost breathless to every cadence that fell from her lips. Walter Shirley observed all this; he felt baffled and bewildered; he wondered who was this arch-enchanter, that, with one fell blow, had destroyed the shining spell he had wrought?

"Who is that person now worshipping at Miss Willoughby's shrine. He was introduced a moment ago by old Bedford," he asked of Frederick De Vere, who was lounging near him after the song was finished.

"Eh!" he said, lifting his eye-glass with a superb air of superiority, "*oui*, that is *un de mes frères!*"

"The deuce!"

"No, *il est fou*, which is as bad. He is *bas* in his tastes, and we are almost strangers. Were you at the opera last night?"

"Yes: but 'pon my life, I can't tell you what the opera was. I was fanning and flirting with Dora Livingston all the evening. After I handed her to her carriage, I went to the club."

"*Engageant!* Flirting never commits a fellow; but *beau parler n'écorche pas la langue*, and keeps one from dying with *ennui*," he replied, laughing.

But Walter Shirley still, from his post of observation, watched Edith. He saw her turn away from her harp; another instant, and she was leaning on De Vere's arm, her radiant face uplifted to his, which, lit up with noble intellectuality and truth, reflected in every line the contagious brightness of her smiles. She had thanked him for the service he had rendered her with such sincere and graceful warmth, and rallied him so successfully on his flight from Mr. Bedford's laboratory, that his false pride melted away beneath the genial influence of her manner, and without an effort he found himself replying in the same spirit to her badinage, and giving free expression to the pure and elevating sentiments of his heart in elegant and well-chosen phrases. She directed his attention to Masoletti's paintings, and told eloquently the young artist's story, and how he was rescued from absolute penury by a noble-hearted friend of Mr. Bedford's, who had acci-

dentally discovered his wretched haunt, and relieved his wants. A consciousness of this person's identity called up a deeper glow to Harry De Vere's handsome face, and he blessed her in his heart for her random eulogy, but betrayed not himself or his benefactions by a word, and extolled the productions of the young Italian with such nice acumen and taste, that it was very evident to Edith he possessed the judgment without the wordy pretensions of a connoisseur. From painting they passed to books; they admired the same authors, and exhibited a congeniality of taste and sentiment which gave perfect harmony to their conversation. But they were unceremoniously interrupted by a party of dowagers, who took possession of a lounge at no great distance, and began to discuss, in audible terms, the singularity of Mrs. Lacy's being invited by Mrs. Willoughby to her very select and fashionable *soirée*.

"Have you spoken to her?" asked one.

"Certainly. I dare not cut her, here; it is evident Mrs. Willoughby is patronizing her," she replied.

"I heard Mrs. Willoughby call her 'Caroline;' they must be old friends," suggested another.

"Lord, how stupid you all are! Didn't you hear Cicely Thorne say that she was at Mrs. Lacy's when Mrs. Willoughby called, and what a scene there was?" exclaimed one.

"No: for pity's sake tell us about it!" And she recited the account of the interview we described in another chapter, with the addition of certain exaggerated annotations of Miss Thorne's own, which certainly contributed very much to its graphic interest. "I went up to her the moment I saw her, and spoke as if nothing had happened," concluded the lady.

"And how did Mrs. Lacy behave?" inquired one; "for you were one of the first to cut her, when Lacy failed?"

"Oh! it's the way of the world to do such things, my dear. People naturally expect it. Mrs. Lacy is a well-bred, good-natured person, and of course she received me as a lady should do," replied she.

"There are no such dinners given in town this season as we used to have at her table last winter. Souls! what lobster-sauce and savoury *ragoûts* we used to get!" exclaimed the first.

"She's elegantly dressed! I don't think it looks well, in her circumstances; but here she comes. That is Colonel Sumner, the great western senator, with her; how delighted he appears to be with her society! And there is Mrs. Willoughby, following her—here they all are—let us observe what is going on."

"Mrs. Lacy, I fear you will think me ungenerous; but I have come to beg another favor," said Mrs. Willoughby, pleasantly.

"How another? Have I bestowed a favor without knowing it?" she replied.

"A greater than you are aware of, possibly. I will not mystify you any longer, however. You have honored us with your company this evening—and I ought to be reasonable, and feel contented with the pleasure conferred—but selfishness rules the world, dear; and I cannot forbear begging you to exercise for us a beautiful gift, that formerly used to enchant us at the old Holme."

"Ah, dear Mrs. Willoughby, I would gladly be excused. I have had realities to deal with which have somewhat blunted my imagination; but if it will afford even a passing gratification, I will try," she said, while a blush mantled her face.

"Stand forth confessed, thou improvisatrice! Unfold thy buried talent! Charm us with some poetic theme, or tale of old. Let us fancy ourselves, for the time, in the land of poetry—Italia—and thou its genius," said Mr. Bedford, with a chivalric air.

"And thou Apollo," she said, laughingly, while she adopted his high-flown phraseology, and the ruling spirit of the moment.

"Or Apollo's great-grandsire," he replied, passing his hand over his snowy hair; "that was a cruel jibe, Caro; I almost fancied I was the Adonis of the evening, until your cutting compliment made the contrast ridiculous. I demand tribute for the affront."

"And I merely plead," remarked Mrs. Willoughby.

"While I implore," said the senator.

Then gathered around her the flatterers who had once basked in her prosperity, and amidst its genial sunshine lauded her talents with wondering exclamations and flattering *pæans*, but who had, when the dark change came, forgotten her and all, until Mrs. Willoughby's noble and true indications of friendship reminded them of it. Then they remembered how the revelations of the ideal used to charm them when uttered by her; and the startling brilliancy of her vivid fancies and wild imaginings, which ofttimes won tears—human tears—from their indurated hearts.

"Give me a theme, then," she said, unable to resist their entreaties any longer without falling under the imputation of what she despised—affectation. "Name a theme, and if I cannot give you poetry I will favor you with a lecture, which I take for granted you will bear with becoming patience—as you have yourselves provoked your fate."

"Love!"

"Sappho!"
"Rome!"
"Greece!"
"Helen!"
"Penelope!"
"Friendship!"

These were successively proposed, but all were overruled by acclamation in favor of "Friendship." Unfortunate choice! Mr. Bedford shrugged his shoulders with one of his expressive smiles, and Mrs. Willoughby thought—"Ye have acted out the satire; now listen to its history." Mrs. Lacy's arm leaned on a pedestal that supported an antique marble bust, behind which a luxuriant *Laurestina's*, with its dark glossy leaves and clustering snowy flowers, had been placed, to give the sculpture finer effect, by throwing it out in strong contrast to its olive background. Her fine blue eyes were raised upwards, and she waved her hand with a graceful gesture. There was an instant hush. Her perfect Grecian features gradually wore a rapt expression, and on her low broad forehead, from which the clustering brown tresses were fastened back by large opals, the spirit of imagination sat enthroned. A saffron-colored brocade, confined around the symmetrical waist by a narrow band of velvet, which was clasped by a single opal, formed her attire. A low corsage revealed her snowy shoulders and beautifully turned neck, while her bared arms, fair and rounded, needed no ornament to enhance the loveliness of their exquisite proportions. A smile hovered around her lips, and glancing on the expectant faces around her she began, in a clear, richly-modulated voice, her unpremeditated lay on

FRIENDSHIP.

In one of those fair isles which, on the tide
Of the Ægean, glow like floating gems,
Upon whose silvery shore the foaming waves
Burst like low music through the whisp'ring reeds,
And leave bright-tinted shells among the sands,
Where Ariadne wandered 'neath the shade
Of fragrant vines borne down with luscious fruit,
Which ripened in the sun, and where of yore
Apollo with his lyre sang of love;
There dwelt a pair, whose life was one sweet dream
Of bliss.
They looked upon the sunny sea,
And watched the floating clouds at eventide,
Through which the lustrous moon and hef lone star
Walked silently, like angels clad in white.

And in the dewy morn, while purpling mists
Draped o'er the golden orient, they wove
Fair garlands of the ever-blooming flowers
And luscious grapes, and in their homeward dance
Sang songs of love.
Within a ruined hall,
Sole fragment of a marble temple, where
In olden times Diana's sacred shrine
Was tended by a train of vestals fair,
Who heard amidst mysterious rites the words
Of oracles, they dwelt.
Vines trailed around
Each fluted pillar, and through crevices
In the rich, time-worn roof, the fire flies, stars,
And gold-eyed flowers peeped down; and each lone niche
Was bright with pearly shells, or amber lamps,
Which filled the air with incense.
In the midst
Of all there was a rare old coffer, filled
With grains of such a sparkling, changeful hue,
That rainbows seemed to brood around the spot.
And as the winds, all odorous with sweets,
Stole in, they moved among these golden sands
With such soft melodies, that birds of light
And song, with sunshine on their wings, drew near
To listen—hushed themselves—and bask awhile
In the bright gleam, then burst in one wild strain
Of melody.
Through the long summer nights
They fluttered; warbling still their blithesome notes,
Nor wearied with the dawn.
The flowers were filled
With dews, which shone like gems 'neath the strange spell,
And from the vines were honey-drops distilled,
On which they feasted.
It was an Eden,
Where no darkling shadows e'er had passed;
And they, in their credulity, dreamed naught
Of change. They thought the light could ne'er grow dim,
The blossoms fade, or song birds flee away
From their old haunt, so near their loving hearts.

But one fair eve, when from the fields of heaven
A shower of roses fell upon the sea;
And sapphire fountains dropped their gleaming spray,
From the bright clouds aslant the waves, and hues
Of violet-like robes of royal state,
Glowed round the distant isles, they wandered out,
Straying along the shore in converse sweet,
While spicy winds fanned back their silken hair,
Until a Shape, with pale and solemn brow,
And pitying eyes, draped in no mortal folds,
Stood in their path.

Their cheeks grew pale; they turned,
And would have fled; but lo! it still was there.
Where'er they moved, their eyes could not evade
The SHAPE. Tall, grim, and gaunt, it mocked their fears
With the same awful smile, and whispered, "*Give me all!*"
"What wouldst thou, phantom? What dost thou demand?"
"Thy coffer!"
"Oh, our treasured fount of light,
Our chime! 'twill make our homes so desolate;
Our birds will droop—their festive songs be hushed
For very pity!"
"Listen, poor heirs of earth:
That which ye value is but worthless dust;
Fair to behold, but filled with bitterness;
And yet beneath it all lie some rare pearls,
Which no imperial treasury can boast.
I have a test: Behold this magic sieve,
Through which those sparkling grains will fly like chaff;
'Twill try your souls, the dark and sudden gloom,
The withering blight, the silence; but those pearls
Are worth it all!"
Her presence chilled the earth!
Up shrunk the flowers and paled; the vine-leaves sighed
And shivered fitfully; then a sad mist
Crept o'er the scene!
The SHAPE began her task,
And with relentless hand scooped up the grains
Until the sieve was filled—then, muttering low
An incantation-weird, she deftly threw
It to and fro her pallid hands, and lo!
A shower of ashes, chaff, and dust were borne
Away upon the winds; while fluttering shrunk
The silent birds, without one pitying note,
Or parting strain, to fairer climes.
Tears fell;
And one wild lamentation sounded forth
From these two stricken hearts.
The tempest wailed
And shuddered like an evil thing amid
The gloom profound, but still the solemn SHAPE
Toiled on unceasingly. But soon a ray
Of lambent beauty glimmered where she stood.
It brightened—shone with light ineffable;
Until a cluster of resplendent pearls,
Freed from the chaff and grossness of the earth,
Lit up the shadows of ADVERSITY,
Like friends—

And here, while Mrs. Lacy's eyes were bedewed with emotion she could not altogether control, she laid her hand on Mrs. Willoughby's arm, and concluded the sentence—

Like friends who heed not Fortune's changing smiles,
But cling the closer when her frowns appear.

"May those pearls encircle your heart alway, Caro," replied Mrs. Willoughby, surprised and affected by her involuntary exhibition of feeling; then kissing her cheek, added, "you deserve a girdle of the purest pearls that friendship can weave."

The whole scene, without being intended as such, was a keen reproach to many. All understood the meaning of her poetical allegory, and the beautiful application of it, as conveyed by her expressive gesture to Mrs. Willoughby. There was a murmur of applause; eyes grew moist that were almost strangers to tears; and those who, knowing the history of her changes, her courage in adversity, had fled with the sunlight, and left her to find consolation as she might in her desolation, blushed at their worldly inconstancy, and felt how infinitely superior she had risen, in her poverty, above their sordid ideas. Through dewy tears shone forth the rainbows of Edith's sensitive heart, and while every feature quivered with emotion, she clasped her hands together, and said, in a low tone, "How I shall love her!" Never before had Harry De Vere seen her so radiantly lovely. He appreciated her feelings with kindred emotions; and, as his eye rested on her, he would have given a king's ransom, he would have thought no peril or danger too great, no difficulty insurmountable, to win one solitary hour of her heart's devotion. He felt that one hour thus brightened would shine, like a lamp, in his pathway through life, and the remembrance of it leave such sweet visions of bliss as might never be forgotten. Kind angel of life! had power only been given thee to have then unveiled these two loving hearts, how much anguish might both have been spared!

After this, it was the fashion to invite Mrs. Lacy everywhere; but she had learned to estimate at their true value, but not to scorn, such attentions.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEREIN HEART-CHORDS ARE FINGERED TO THEIR OWN MUSIC.

CHORD FIRST.

" ——— He beat the surges under him,
And rode upon their backs;—he trode the water,
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted
The surge most swoln that met him: his bold head
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oared
Himself with his good arms, in lusty stroke,
To the shore that o'er his time-worn basis bowed,
As stooping to relieve him: I doubt not
He came alive to land!"
Alon. ——————— " No! no! he's gone."

TEMPEST.

THE eye of the traveller, either going to or from the city, in a westerly direction, is generally attracted by a massive gateway and porter's lodge, built of granite in the florid Gothic style, which stands on the broad road-side, a few miles out. Overhung by immense trees, it reminds one of the entrance to one of those old historic domains so common in England, and one's imagination can at once conjure up magnificent parks, stately avenues, and feudal towers beyond.

The first beams of morning, unclouded and bright, gilded the scene. Frost gems glittered on the naked boughs, and hung like pendant diamonds from the lesser sprays. The old earth was sprinkled with a hoar-frost which beautified its withered face. The sound of bells chiming a thousand different notes out on the clear cold air, as the horses whose necks they adorned pranced gayly along, bearing the produce of the neighboring farms to the city market; and the blithe songs of the laughter-loving lads and lasses who drove them enlivened the scene. The heavy portals were now thrown back, and two wains, loaded with dry clover and winter apples, scenting the frosty atmosphere with fragrance, rolled majestically out, drawn by oxen whose sleek sides, glossy dewlaps, and great meek eyes, indicated their familiarity with a well-filled rack and manger. Beyond these portals, at the termination of a broad-paved avenue, pillared on each side, and almost roofed over

by enormous chestnut and walnut trees, appeared a magnificent structure of stone, marble, and brick, whose innumerable windows flashed back the golden sunlight in luminous array. Was it the abode of a retired merchant prince, or had some exiled European potentate reared the splendid pile, on republican ground, as a sort of *amende honorable* to his insulted dignities at home? No. It was merely the county almshouse!—the abode of State paupers, who might have prided themselves, as people in the world are apt to do, on an abstract idea of importance, derived from the splendor of their residence.

Hitherward and alone up the wide avenue, a man plodded his way. A drab-colored substantial pea-jacket, a trig-looking tarpaulin hat, and pantaloons of navy-blue, with his rolling gait, declared him to be a legitimate son of the sea. His hair, once black and curling, was now grizzled and almost white—as much bleached by hardship and care as by the suns, the dews, and hoar-frosts of time. His eyes, keen and mirthful in their expression, were a light blue, and his nose, reddened by the morning frost, wore a jolly *rétroussé* air. His mouth had nothing to recommend it, except a puckered, quizzical expression, and the infinite dexterity with which it managed a delicious *morceau* in the shape of a tobacco-quid, whose flavor, as he transferred it from one cheek to another, appeared to afford him infinite satisfaction. He flourished a stout cudgel in one hand, and when he reached the stately entrance, heedless of bell or knocker, he applied it to the floor with such effect that an official, clad in the livery of the place, sprang from his seat in an adjoining room, and, stumbling over a cat and two growling dogs, rushed out to answer the unusual summons; but, seeing only a single man, who was of humble rank, he drew himself up, resumed the importance of "brief authority," and, in sharp, querulous tones, demanded the intruder's business; while the dogs, reassured by their master's voice, sprang out, snarling and yelping around the sailor's knees.

"Avast there, shipmate! Shiver my jib, but I'm no pirate. Haul off your grappling-irons, I say," cried the sailor, keeping the dogs at bay with his cudgel.

"The navy ought to take care of her own paupers," muttered the official, after calling the noisy animals off. "Did you bring a order of admission from the board of directors with you?"

"Tack about again, shipmate. You're out o' your latitude, intirely," said the sailor, laughing, while he transferred his quid, for the twentieth time, from one cheek to the other, and dispensed a shower of the amber juice from his mouth to the porch beyond.

"Don't do that 'ere agin—don't. We allow no sich proceed-

ings here. You've got relations here, I s'pose?" said the enraged doorkeeper.

"No. Split my timbers if I have!" replied the sailor, proudly. "But may-be—may-be—who knows? It's been a many years in the log-book of time since I had a signal," he said, in an undertone.

"Look'ee, old fellow, people don't often come here for amusement," observed the official, in a voice of smothered anger and impatience; "so, if you come in that 'ere gate yonder for a ramble this fine morn', you can gist ramble out agin. The example of people walking about idle on these premises is pernicious to the paupers. They're spiled already by over-indulgin'. If you come on business, let quick be the word, for I've some hundred pounds of wool to see weighed yet, afore breakfast."

"Blow on, old Boreas! I'd rather have a white squall a-lee than abaft, any hour of the day," said the sailor, laughing. "I ain't been on the ocean amongst whales these forty years to be scared by a Johnny Doree,* in these shallow soundin's."

"Git out of here with your gibberish. Begone! Here, you Jowler—you Wasp, seize him!" cried the man, enraged beyond endurance at being jeered in terms which he conceived to be superlatively offensive, because he could not clearly comprehend them. But his tormentor seized Jowler by the throat in his sinewy fist, as he sprang at him, and, with a well-aimed blow of his cudgel, stretched Wasp howling at his master's feet.

"Now tell me, you land-lubber, you shoal pirate, you infernal wrecker! if there's an old craft laid up hereabouts, called the Jane Wilkins?" shouted he, backing the now terrified official up against the wall.

"Mr. Hartly, Mr. Hartly! I shall be murdered!" he bawled, at the top of his voice. "Help, ho! help."

The Mr. Hartly, thus vociferously invoked, was the superintendent of the almshouse, and had been an amused, but unseen spectator of the scene throughout, from the staircase of the second story, which commanded a full view of it. At the moment the sailor announced his presence, by applying his cudgel to the floor, which reverberated and echoed through the passages like the detonation of a six-pounder, Mr. Hartly was returning from his regular morning inspection of the different wards to his own apartment, where his breakfast awaited him. Amazed at the unusual hubbub, and the vociferous sounds that ensued, he paused, and leaned over the balustrade, highly amused with the

* A small fish.

progress of the adventure, and thinking in his heart that it was a just penance his subordinate was enduring, for his unjust aspersion on him, "as spiling the paupers by over-indulgin'." He was a stout man; and from excessive good-nature, temperate living, and an unvexed mind, had fallen into fat. There was much of human kindness in his broad red face—much of benevolence, mixed up with a bit of humor, which even his official duties among paupers could not *vinegarize* into anything resembling the acerbity we naturally expect to see souring the visage of a Bumble. He was much liked by the inmates of the institution, and respected by its rulers, for his humanity and strict regard to the regulation and observance of its laws. Scarcely able to restrain his mirth, he came down as fast as his unwieldy frame allowed him, and asked—

"What's the row, Smith? Eh, what's the trouble, old boy?"

"That fellow, there; he bust in like thunder, jist now; killed my dogs, and was about a' stranglin' of me, when—I giv the alarm!" panted the coward.

"Well—well, Joey, boy, I'm sorry—'deed I be, that you got such a terrible fright. Go up to my room, old fellow; get a cup of hot coffee; you'll find all right up there, Joey; Johnny-cake and all. I'll deal with this son-of-a-gun as he deserves, sure I will; up with you!" said the old fellow, almost bursting with laughter, when Joey, eyeing the sailor with sidelong glances, sneaked up stairs.

"What do you want here, my good fellow? You didn't come, I reckon, jist for the pleasure and satisfaction of killing Joey's dogs; though it's a good job done if they be dead, the nasty varments; a good job. They got, by hook or by crook, many a nice morsel that the sick folk ought to had. But never mind; what's your will?" he said, poking his fat forefinger under the sailor's ribs.

"Why, commodore!" replied he, kicking the ugly cur at his feet far out on the gravelled walk, "that's a reg'lar water-bailiff, that fellow. He overhauled me as if I'd bin a slaver; then sot his dogs at it; *at* which, my mag'zine fired, and I'd a' blowed the whole consarn to the devil, if you hadn't towed him off."

"But your business, you son of thunder?" asked Hartly, chuckling. "Who dy'e want to see; me? I'm superintendent and commander-in-chief here, for want of a better."

"You're a jolly old figure-head, anyhow, commodore," said the sailor, regaining his good-humor, and shaking the superintendent's hand with a grip that made the water spring to his eyes. "You see, I'm cruising about in sarch of what I s'pose is a wreck

by this time, though when I went away, thirty-five years agone, a trimmer craft never sailed the seas. She was called the Jane Wilkins; but my messmates and I, as lived with her when ashore, called her Mother Jennet. I was telegraphed that she was stranded somewhere about here."

"Of course she is; she takes care of the babies! *We* call her Mother Jennet, too—babies and all; follow me, man. She's the cheeriest, heartiest old soul that ever breathed, sir. Five year ago, she was brought here very bad with a low fever of some kind; she was very ill. I heard the doctors say it was a critical case; a aggravated case; but they brought her through, our doctors did; and, I must say, it was a remarkable cure, sir. Then, when she got on her feet again, she was so cheerful and busy—never idle a minute—that the Institution offered her a support and allowance—a small one, you know; for snuff, tea, and other hick and haws, as old women like—to take care of the babies, of which we always have a round number. And, the upshot was, as she had no home, sir, and no relations to take care of her in her old days; in short, no dependence of any kind or description, she took the offer kindly. She's one of the matrons, sir, Mother Jennet is. But hold on; here we are," said Mr. Hartly, throwing open the door of a long, spacious, and well-ventilated apartment, at the upper end of which blazed a cheerful fire. Near this, on a low chair, sat a little tidy, rosy-cheeked old woman, whose face glowed, beneath her white-plaited cap-frill, like a winter apple, ruddy and unwrinkled. She was clad in a long-waisted brown-stuff gown, and a voluminous white apron. On her lap lay a child some ten months old, crowing and laughing, as she alternately fed it with pap, and snapped her fingers in a running accompaniment as she sang—

"Charlie loves a cup of tea;
He loves sugar-candy O!
Charlie loves a pretty girl,
And Charlie loves the brandy O!
Over the river, and over the river,
And over the river to Charlie O!"

"That's her—sartain," said the sailor, brushing his rough brown hand over his eyes. "No need of glasses to see that; but, look out, shipmate."

He pushed his tarpaulin on one side of his head, which gave him a jaunty air, and thrusting his hand down into his fathomless pockets, he leaned his shoulder against the door, and whistled a few bars of "Black-eyed Susan," so clear and shrill, that, if every pauper baby in the ward had been shrieking, it would have soared,

in its wild, clarion-like notes, above the combined discord. Mother Jennet's song was hushed. From her face the rose-hue faded; her thin lips, white and trembling, in vain essayed to speak, and, hugging the babe to her breast, she started up, advanced a step or two, and gazed wildly at the strange intruder. Then, overcome by agitation, retreated quickly to her chair, muttering—"Lauk, no! It can't be! He's under the ocean wave, long—long ago—poor Will!" But at this instant, a variation occurred in the air, to which he gave a peculiar, but musical quiver, that caused Mother Jennet to spring from her chair again, lean forward, and, holding the child in one arm, shade her eyes with her hand, and gaze keenly, and with strained glances at the musician. "I never heard but one as could do that, and that was Will Dobbler," she exclaimed; "but, as I said afore, *he's* under the salt sea, many years ago. There it is again—God preserve us! Whistler, in God's name, is it you?"

"Mother Carey," cried the sailor, laughing, while tears rolled over his rough cheeks.

"Whistler," shrieked the old woman, rushing, baby and all, into his extended arms.

"That's the name, sir, she used to hail me by, when I and a few jolly shipmates boarded with her, years ago; and *we* called her Mother Carey, 'cause she used to say we always kept the wind and waves too high around her with our larks. You know, commodore, a Mother Carey's chicken is a bird we old salts don't like to see out o' sight of land," said the sailor, giving Mother Jennet another hearty hug, and kissing her withered cheek.

The superintendent was in hysterics. His eyes were decidedly tearful, but his sides quivered with laughter, and his face grew purple between conflicting emotions, while he contemplated the two.

"Very good—excellent; it's a raal play, got up for my 'special benefit, this morn'," he ejaculated, in broken sentences. "You ARE a Whistler, and no mistake; but whistling won't fill your stomach. Mother Jennet, I say, can you spare him some pap for his breakfast? If you can't, I'll send a substitute as is one."

"Lord, honey, I'm beside myself. Do go, there's a good master, and send up that 'ere new dish; sure, I ain't got the power left in me to draw a cup o' tea, and that 'll help out; that sub——. I don't remember outlandish names. Laukee, me, now all the babies is wakin' up. Here, Robin Hood, here's a crust, a nice crust, petty; there, Birdeen, hush—sh—sh—sh; be still, Goliah, you creetur, there's a sugar-teat for it, the greedy pig; the institution must get it a nanny-goat, nothin' short will satisfy its cravin'.

There now, little Daisy's gone and opened her eyes—sh—sh—hush'ee. Now, Dolly Snow's a turnin' up; hush'ee by, baby, on the tree-top; when the winds blow, the cradle will rock; sh—hushee—hushee—sh—sh." And so Mother Jennet went from one crib to another, soothing and quieting the little forlorn human *waifs*, who did not feel, under her kind care, the usual hard destiny of foundlings and paupers.

"I'm sorry to leave you, Whistler; I'd like to stay a bit longer; but this is directors' day, and I've got an account or two to square yet. Give us your hand; I tell you, old boy, you've done me a sight of good, and I hope you'll make yourself at home, and help Mother Carey to nurse her chickens 'till I pop in again," said Mr. Hartly, giving Will Dobbler's hand a warm shake.

"Many thanks for the same, commodore, and *for* hoisting friendly colors to a weather-beaten craft as was in distress," he replied, with feeling.

"I'm your debtor for life, Mr. Whistler, for giving Joey and his varmints such a lesson as you did; I'll see you again in an hour or so," said Mr. Hartly, chuckling, and laughing to himself until he got out of sight.

"Now honey, Will, sit down here, jist where I can see you; that's the place," said Mother Jennet; while tears, like rain with the April sunshine gleaming on them, twinkled in endless succession over her cheeks. "And you warn't drowned, arter all? Twenty—twenty-five—thirty—thirty-five years ago, the news come that the bark Mermaid was wrecked in furrin parts, and all perished."

"Most all—a'most all went down to Davy's Locker, that wild night, Mother Jennet; but they went like men, like sons of the sea; strong, hale, and hearty; no land fevers, or palsies, or wearin' out old age, battered their hulks; but all taut, their cordage trimmed, and sails furled, they went down among the coral reefs, through fathoms of brine, to rest in their hammocks until the great Captain above pipes all hands a-board again," said Will Dobbler, while his chest heaved, and the muscles of his face worked with the anguish of remembrance.

"And you, honey?" asked the old woman, after a short silence.

"Me! I was settling for a final plunge, and Lord! how the storm howled; how the waves roared; but may-be you've heerd twelve thousand head of buffaloes a bellowin' at once. No—well I tell *you*, the roarin' of twelve thousand wounded buffaloes, on a injin prayrie, is a mere carcumstance to the onnatural, onarthly moanin' of the sea that night. I was dead foundered, Mother Carey, and was about goin' down the third time when a hencoop dashed ath'art my bows. One man was hangin' to it, like a monkey on

a main chain; and with one desp'rate tug with the waves, I reached it, and somehow clambered beside him. In another minute the whole consarn was dashed high and dry on a rocky lea shore. With the little stamina I had left, I dragged the poor half-drowned devil further up on the beach, jist in time, by gorry, to keep the surf from washin' us out again. The long and short of the yarn is this. The Mermaid was wrecked off one of the South Sea Islands; we two, out of eight hundred men, was all that ever seen sunrise again, and among the cannibals at that. Maneaters! the fiercest devils unhung. They roasted poor Phil and ate him, but spared me, because I happened to 'a been tattooed on my arms, by a red skin, when I was a younker. Yes; these here spread eagles, and arrows, and crosses, done in Proosian blue on my flappers, saved my life; they thought I was a tabooed man, and treated me well enough for four years or more. But one night, the moon was shinin' like a light in the binnacle, and the stars, Mother Carey, like so many port-holes, let down blazes on the sea; I spied a ship castin' anchor, a mile or so out on the offing; so givin' three cheers, into the surf I plunged, and swum like a shark 'till I got alongside, hailed the watch, and finally stood on a man-o'-war's deck once more. The next day we sot sail for the Injies, where I cruised about, picking up a prize here and there, and have come home, Mother Carey, with yallow gold enough for all us."

"There's them livin' as will be glad to hear it, Whistler!" said the old woman, wiping her eyes.

"Now we be comin' around to the right p'int of the compass. I was afeard to ax about 'em!" said the sailor, with emotion.

"They're very poor, Whistler! very poor! Old Paul is doting, and Rachel has a hard time to get on, I tell you. I'm afeard they want bread sometimes; but cheer up, lad; where's the use in frettin' now? Ain't you home once more, and won't their last days be their best, please God?" replied Mother Jennet, drawing his great brown hand gently away from his eyes.

"Yes! shiver my topsail, they shall. The latter end of their cruise shall be a jolly one, or my name's not Will Dobbler! But there's yet another. You remember when Paul and Rachel steered westward, he left a child with—with—you know who; I never got over that, Mother Carey. I have never called her name since her faithful heart struck its flag, and went down ten fathom under the green billows of the churchyard. When I went that v'yage to Brazeel, there was life and love at home, a lamp in the lighthouse; but all was dark and still when I got back to port. You had taken Paul's child, little Maggie, under convoy, and I left her with you. Where is she? Dead?"

"The Lord knows, Will! the Lord only knows! It's that as grieves old Paul so! He's always asking for Maggie. You know he's childish, and he goes out every day expectin' to find her; but he'll never find her now, in my opinion!"

"Is she dead, think you?"

"As I said afore, the Lord only knows! One day, when she was about fifteen, she run off with a smart young chap belongin' to the ship-yard. He was a caulker, and his name was Jack Divers. I heerd they got married, and went north'ard. I never saw her afterwards. It was soon after that Paul and Rachel come back, poor things!" A heart-wrung groan escaped the sailor's breast. "Don't take on so, Will," continued Mother Jennet, "don't. Here's nice hot coffee, and hot buttered bread from the master's own table; take sum'ut; he sent it with the truest of welcome, I know!" She took the steaming bowl and platter from the hands of the boy who brought them, and arranged them temptingly on a small table near her visitor; but he pushed back his chair and said, "It's no use, Mother Carey! The commodore's mighty kind; may he never want pork or duff in his locker! But I can't eat; I feel choky, somehow, since you told me how storm-tossed my kith and kin be. I must up hellum* and give 'em chase. What course must I steer?"

"You remember the old ropewalk, and the beech-tree spring?"

"Ay—ay; well!"

"Inquire about there; there be many houses built up since you was last there; but they were put up for the accommodation of poor folks, and some are tumblin' to pieces a'ready!" she replied.

"All's right, and steady's the word; my course is clear, and no mistake. Good-by; there's a keepsake for you until I come again," he said, dropping three or four broad gold pieces in her apron. The unwonted sight, the sudden possession of such enormous wealth, as they seemed to present to the poor old almshouse matron, deprived her of the faculty of speech for a little while; she gathered up the shining coins, and, holding them up to the light, examined with a curious eye first one side and then the other; and when she would have poured out her voluble thanks to her benefactor, she turned—she looked in every direction around her—but Whistler was gone. * * * * * *

CHORD SECOND.

"The prosperous deem not
That still miracles happen; for only in misery owns man
God's kind hand, and His finger, by which good men are to good works Guided."

GOETHE.

* Helm.

In his rush-bottomed chair, with his sharp elbows resting on the arms, and his long, talon-like fingers knit together supporting his chin, sat old Paul. His lank white locks fell over his temples and shoulders, and his mist-covered eyes peered steadily into the flickering embers of the grate. The sun's rays, stealing through the half-curtained window behind him, tinged the outline of his poor old bowed frame with grotesque brightness, as if light from the half-open portals of death were dawning around him, the way-worn, time-tossed pilgrim.

By his side knelt Rachel Hewlett, holding his breakfast, which consisted of a small bowl of gruel of the poorest kind, and a piece of toast moistened with hot water. Meekly and patiently, her own fast unbroken, knelt she, waiting until the spell passed away from the clouded mind, to minister to his meagre wants. The spirit of the Roman daughter lived beneath that scant garb of poverty. A more than Roman spirit had taught her resignation in life's conflict; the talismanic emblem of her inner faith, high courage. The splinters of the cross ofttimes wounded her patient soul; but, a member of the THORN-CROWNED HEAD, she rebelled not by murmurs, counting herself unworthy even of suffering with Him. This was her secret—her inspiration; the lamp that cheered her poor soul's inner sanctuary; the treasure that would enter the eternal portals with her—those portals which would close for aye on the tribulation of sighs and tears, when the fitful dream was over.

"Father, dear! take it now, while it is warm!" she said, gently.

"Eh, Rache, good child! what wouldst thou now, Rache?" he said, slowly turning his head towards her.

"Eat, dear father—it is time you broke your fast! Here is something warm, and only behold how bright the sunshine comes in! I hear, too, a robin chirping without—there, he is perched on the window-sill; listen, dear, how blithely he whistles! Does it not make you glad?" she said, with a smile on her thin, care-worn face.

"But the whole earth is parched up, Rache; it wants rain, rain—child. And I'll tell thee a brave secret; come closer," he said with a cunning look. "It is all frozen; every drop of it is frozen in my eyes. That is the reason why there is such trouble around us. Ha, ha, ha! That's a brave secret, child. When rain-drops melt down from my frozen eyes, all will be right again; all will be right, Rache—all clear."

"Yes, dear!" said the patient Rachel, "all will be right then, all clear!"

"And I can find our Maggie, child. I can find her, then!" he said, exultingly.

"Among the angels, father, dear—among the angels of God!" said the woman, lifting her eyes upwards.

"They never grow old there, do they, Rache? The little children, I say, never grow older for thousands of eternal years?" he asked, after a short pause.

"Never—never grow old, dear!" she replied, strangely moved by his wild but spiritual talk.

"Then will I know *her*, among them all? We have had a rough journey, Rache—a rough journey; but the end is peace!" he said calmly, while a ray of intelligence beamed forth from his sunken eyes.

"Suffering and poverty are purifiers of our fallen nature!" said the woman, meekly. "The will of God be glorified forever and ever!"

"Yes, forever and ever," echoed the old man. Then he spoke no more; and, after a short reverential pause, she offered him the unnoticed food, of which he partook in silence. Just then, a low timid knock was heard at the door, and when Mrs. Hewlett opened it, her surprise was great when she saw an old, weather-beaten stranger standing on the threshold, his head bared, his countenance betraying anxiety, and his whole manner indicating powerful but suppressed emotion. Obeying her courteous invitation in silence, he walked in, and seated himself opposite the old man.

"That is my father, sir—he is very infirm," she observed, taking up her sewing from her work-basket.

"Ay, ay! His v'yage is nearly over, that's clear!" replied the sailor.

"Who is it, Rachel—who is it, child?" asked old Paul.

"It's no use tacking; the wind's ahead, but it's no use tacking. I ain't used to it. I can't do it," muttered the sailor. "Holloa, old shipmate, you had a brother once!" he continued, drawing his chair, suddenly, near the aged man; "you had a brother, I say."

"Did he say a brother, Rachel? Who is he, dear?"

"A friend, father—he's a friend, come to talk with you about old times," said the trusting Rachel. "Talk pleasantly, sir, if you please; he is childish, quite childish," she whispered.

"Ay, ay: one beat of the surf would dash the old wreck to pieces. I mean well, I'm sailing under true colors. I say, old gentleman, you had a brother once, Will Dobbler—a sea-farin' dog, a brother—"

"I don't know who you are," he moaned. "Little Maggie is gone. I might have had a brother; but the salt brine, and the

clods of the valley, and the earth-worms, go ask 'em. They can tell you. I don't know, I'm sure."

Honest Will dashed his rough hand over his eyes, and got up, and walked to and fro the narrow room.

"I remember him, sir; I remember him well; but he was lost at sea!" said Mrs. Hewlett, timidly.

"No—he was not lost at sea. He *was* saved. Then he went to the Injies, where he got more rupees than he wanted, and the yallow fever—"

"And did he die there, sir?" asked Mrs. Hewlett.

"Out o' your reckonin' *in*tirely. He didn't die. He and yallow Jack had a reg'lar hard battle, but he got the vict'ry—huzza. Don't you know me, Rache? Huzza—I'm your uncle—huzza!" cried he, pitching his tarpaulin up to the ceiling three times.

"Are you my uncle Will, sir?" she asked, dropping her work on her lap, while she fixed her eyes with a gentle, but penetrating glance on his face, as if endeavoring to find familiar traces and lines which would convince her of his identity.

"*My* name is William Dobbler—boatswain of the Mermaid, when wracked. *His* is Paul Dobbler—*you* are Rachel, *his* daughter! In course, then, I am your uncle. You've had a squally v'yage, old girl—but it's over now; shiver my topsail if it ain't. The log-line of sorrow's run clean out—it'll reckon no more knots on that score. We'll find snug moorings, Rachel, somewhere—" By this time early recollections, which had been almost obscured by sufferings and trials, grew brighter and brighter, until she no longer doubted his identity, but, with a grateful outpouring of her soul to Heaven, for the friend so unexpectedly sent, she fell weeping on the warm-hearted sailor's bosom. * * * * And thus the earth-clouds which had hung so low, so dark and lowering, until naught but the strong pinions of faith could stem the palpable and murky gloom, were suddenly dispersed by the breath of Him who allowed them to gather—and henceforth their pilgrimage would be in peace. * * *

CHORD THIRD.

"What in a name is not, that out of him comes not—
What would come of a house, or what of a city, if each one
Deemed not, aye, that a pleasant task to preserve and restore it,
And to improve, as still new times and foreigners teach us?
'Tis not for a man to shrink like a mushroom back to his nothing
Merely to wither and rot on the spot that gave him his being,
After him no trace of life's ambition leaving.

GOETHE.

"I thought I'd drop in a moment, as I was passing, my dear Mrs. Tresham, to inquire after your cold," said the indefatigable Miss Cicely Thorne, settling herself comfortably among the cushions of a *fauteuil* the footman had wheeled up near the fire for her accommodation.

"Thank you," replied Mrs. Tresham, in a quiet tone, "my cold is better. John, tell Miss Tresham that Miss Thorne is here." Then she resumed her knitting.

"And, my dear Mrs. Tresham," continued her visitor, "I thought it would be no harm to blend charitable business with my social pleasures. You are so good to the poor—so ready always with a donation, although you won't let yourself be seen on a subscription paper—that I am almost sure my request will be granted before I ask it."

"What did you observe, my dear?" asked Mrs. Tresham, looking up.

"She's getting deaf as a beetle," muttered Miss Thorne; then leaning over, repeated what she had said in a louder tone.

"What may be the object now?" she inquired, folding her hands on her lap, and turning her full, placid eyes on the restless visual organs of her guest.

"Our widows, dear! our widows! We have four new ones, as helpless as babes—sickly, meagre, and a dead weight on our society; and you are aware that every additional mouth calls for an additional outlay of our cramped funds," she replied, glibly.

"Well?"

"So, in view of these facts, the lady managers have determined to beg a few hundred dollars to aid the general fund, and keep the society out of debt. As you know, my dear Mrs. Tresham, the object and plans of this particular society are founded on the most philanthropic and benevolent basis—"

"Nothing can be more excellent, Miss Thorne."

"And I know!" continued the benevolent lady, "you will give us a trifle; a mere trifle. We don't expect magnificent donations —but wish *all* to give something; little drops, you know, fill the ocean."

Mrs. Tresham, with a quiet air, put aside the folds of her gray silk dress to get more conveniently at her pocket, out of which she drew her purse, and, opening it, handed Miss Thorne therefrom a half-dollar. Only the day before, she had sent her anonymous contribution of fifty dollars to the "Widow's Refuge."

"You thought this was an eagle, I guess, Mrs. Tresham!" said Miss Thorne, gulping down her disappointment, and endeavoring to conceal her *chagrin*, under a facetious air.

"No!" replied Mrs. Tresham, drily, as she took up her everlasting knitting: "I *am* somewhat deaf, but my sight is not at all defective. You asked for a trifle; I gave you the widow's mite. I cannot afford to bestow a large donation at present."

The entrance of Miss Tresham, a tall, showy-looking girl, in a fashionable India *negligée*, and hair *en papillotte*, interrupted the conversation. An ambitious aspirant for fashionable privileges, she had but just succeeded in getting to the threshold of the *hauton*, and only waited for some fortunate chance to usher her fully into its high mysteries. Miss Thorne's position, as a general *attachée* to every stylish family in town, gave her great importance with Miss Sophia Tresham, who listened to her chit-chat and descriptions, and narratives of the sayings and doings of the exclusives, with the same reverence that a Grecian priestess would have listened to the oracles of the Pythia. She expected much from her assistance, therefore. Miss Thorne's name was ever a welcome announcement; and it not unfrequently happened, during these interviews, that she paid handsome tribute, in the way of charitable contributions from her own quarterly allowance, in return for the flattering hopes which were held out to her dazzled eyes, of finally attaining a position among the ultra fashionables of the town through the influence of her friendship and interest.

Mrs. Tresham was called out by a servant to preside at some domestic consultation. All her movements were so placid that they would not have observed her exit, had she not paused a moment beside Miss Thorne to apologize for "her absence, and hope she would not be gone before she returned to the parlor." Miss Thorne regarded the interruption as a direct interposition of Providence in favor of a plan which she presently developed with her usual skill; and was quite sincere in her "hope that Mrs. Tresham would not hurry back on her account; she knew the imperative demands on a housekeeper's time, and duty *must* be consulted before pleasure."

"What a quiet soul it is! never ruffled, or moved, or excited by passing incidents! She pursues the even tenor of her way through every obstacle—she's in the world, but not of it," she remarked to Miss Tresham, as the door closed.

"Yes! mamma is much too quiet! She is just one of those characters who vegetate in the world, instead of live!—who never look beyond their own humdrum routine! She talks a great deal, to be sure, about rational enjoyment, and the application of riches to noble aims, which *sounds* very grand, only I can't exactly understand it. I'm dying for a new equipage—something stylish, like Mrs. De Vere's; but she puts me down at once, by telling me

'it is out of the question. Our own answers every useful purpose admirably; and what is good enough for her, will do for me.' And it's the shabbiest, old-timed thing! I was carried to church in it, to be christened, when I was a month old—now I'm twenty. Just imagine how horrible it is to be obliged to use the same carriage twenty years!" rattled Miss Tresham.

"Dear me! Mrs. Tresham is one of the best of women; but it is a pity, my dear, for your sake, that, with her income, she is so decidedly behind the age," said Miss Thorne, in a sympathizing tone.

"It's dreadful!" exclaimed the young lady, fairly bursting into tears. "I shall *never* get on, so hampered by mamma's old-fashioned theories. A clear income of fifteen thousand a year, properly applied, would accomplish all I wish. Who, on entering our drawing-rooms, would judge, from the sober, quakerish look of everything, that there were such things as money and taste in the world?"

"True!" chimed in Miss Thorne.

"I purchased with my own money, a few weeks ago, the dearest old set of India china pieces; cream-jug, tea-pot, only a little cracked, sugar-bowl, but no top, and several cups and saucers, to set about on the parlor tables, it being the fashion; but mamma ordered them every one up to my room, with a request that 'I would keep them there; she could not bear such pretension.' Those drab damask curtains are of her selection, and cost more, absolutely, than a set of stylish red ones would; those cornices, so plain, and plated with silver, are twice as expensive as the showy gilded ones one sees everywhere. These chairs, and lounges, and ottomans, without one partcile of gilding, and covered with purple velvet, are more fit for a sober parsonage than a modern drawing-room. Even the mirrors are framed in narrow strips of silver."

"It is all very, very neat, my dear!"

"But it's not the fashion; it's not *recherché*; it's odd without being elegant, and I can't bear it. And as to a fashionable party! no lady abbess could object to waltzing, dressing low, and the divine polka, more than mamma does. But let us change the painful subject. It can't be helped! When I'm my own mistress, I will convince the world that I have some taste. My father's will did me great injustice. He left my brother a handsome allowance, and me entirely dependent on mamma as long as she lives."

"Hope on, hope ever, child! I'll do my best to get you on. Your own attractions, and the reputation of being eventually mistress of a large fortune, will do the rest. But patience, patience, my dear Sophia, must have its perfect work. But bless me, how I am sitting! I came merely to beg a little donation for a most worthy

object, and have lengthened my call into a long social visit; but you are so agreeable, my dear! I was not ten minutes at Mrs. Willoughby's, and merely popped in at Mrs. de Vere's and popped out again, but got ten dollars at each house; sum total twenty. They *never* refuse to respond generously and liberally to charitable demands."

"Of course, mamma has given something handsome?" inquired Sophy Tresham, anxiously.

"If *all* would bestow even the sum that she did, my dear, our funds would rapidly accumulate to a handsome capital; but there are many, unfortunately for the cause of benevolence, who are so parsimonious as to refuse even the smallest trifle," said Miss Thorne, significantly.

"But how much *did* mamma give?"

"Fifty cents, my dear! That will help the cause a little, you know, and it is our rule to refuse nothing. The smallest contribution is valued."

"Oh, oh—I am mortified beyond measure! Only fifty cents from Mrs. Tresham, who can afford to give as many dollars! Pray don't name it, Miss Thorne; I will endeavor to redeem our name from such absolute—I must call it by its true name—meanness. Wait a moment." And Miss Tresham, with crimsoned cheeks, ran up stairs, and, ruled by a false motive which wore the garb of charity, and suggested no higher object than conciliating the world and escaping the imputation of illiberality, she drew from among the loose change in her purse the last half-eagle she had, then, hurrying down, thrust it into Miss Thorne's hand just as Mrs. Tresham returned to her chair and knitting beside the fire. Miss Thorne pressed the hand which silently transferred the welcome coin to her rapacious palm, in appreciation of the generosity of the act, and, feeling more comfortable after her success, yielded to Miss Tresham's entreaties to sit longer.

"We will have a remarkably gay Easter. Miss Willoughby is certainly to be married to Mr. Shirley. Bessie De Vere is engaged to a rich young planter from the South, of high family, named Aubry; *his* name is Herbert Aubry; and it is currently reported that the young English colonel, nephew to lord somebody, is in love with Alice; and there's no doubt but that the three weddings will be celebrated at the same time. Indeed, I have the best authority for saying so; but it is a great secret, and I hope you won't repeat it. There will be no end to the dinners and evening parties which will follow this triple alliance. The town will be like a great carnival, every one will be so gay," observed Miss Thorne, confidentially.

"I know Mr. Frederick De Vere. He's a remarkably elegant young gentleman. I was introduced to him by my brother; but I heard that *he* was a suitor of Miss Willoughby's," said Miss Tresham.

"Yes: I believe he has proposed. It would be a most excellent match for him, in point of family. They are all aiming at alliances of that kind. It is all they need, poor things, to give tone to their wealth, and strength to their position in the world; but *that* match is out of the question, depend on it," said Miss Thorne, a little confused at the *contretemps* she had made; a *contretemps* which made Miss Tresham wince, and caused her mother to lift up her blue, placid eyes with an expression of wonder, and expand and brighten, until the round, fair forehead and gray hair, so lightly covered with a little lace mob-cab, fairly grew radiant, as she burst in with—

"Is worth, then, of no account in the world? John De Vere, although he has foolishly submitted in some respects to the silly dictations of his wife, is a most excellent and worthy man; entitled by his virtues to become the head and founder of a race who may be proud of him, and imitate his life with honor and profit to themselves. Methinks his children, if they resemble him, need not aspire to such worthless and worn-out pretensions as those you have named."

"My opinions, precisely!" said Miss Thorne, lifting upwards both hands and eyes. "You are quite right, Mrs. Tresham; but it is the silly way of the world to be always aspiring to objects it does not possess."

"That is because it does not consider that the successes which it most prizes depend on merit; that a man cannot rise to eminence of any kind except by a combination of qualities which give an upward force to circumstances, independent of mere accidents. The mere fact of high descent never made a hero, or statesman, or philosopher; and fashion, and frippery, and folly never realized any substantial good in the history of the world, that I have heard of," said Mrs. Tresham, with calm decision.

"No, that is quite true. But abstract ideas are out of date," observed Miss Thorne, fidgeting.

"I fear they are, my dear. But, believe me, it is because good abstractions are so much out of fashion, that life is so burdened with misery, that disorders exist in society which are a reproach to a Christian republic, that social evils are daily aggravated until a system of serfdom, far exceeding in its hard exactions the feudal villanage of Europe, is established among us. There is one antidote, however, for the evil; and that is, a high and independent

sentiment of self-respect, which some, thank Heaven, have the courage to exercise," continued Mrs. Tresham, glad of an opportunity of expressing her ultra opinions to one who piqued herself so much on *caste* as did Miss Thorne.

"But you will admit that the most refined enjoyments exist in polished and intellectual society; high-toned pleasures unknown to any other class?" suggested Miss Thorne.

"Intelligent and polished people are not of the class I allude to. I admire both intelligence and refinement if blended with sincerity of character, without which both lose their dignity. I allude to the class whose only aim is fashion, fashion, fashion, to the exclusion of every pursuit that can ennoble and enrich the heart," she replied.

"Ah, madam, the world will have its follies, its peculiar enjoyments. Probably if you and I could recall our youthful bloom, if either of us could exchange ages with—Miss Tresham, for instance, we would view things differently!" blandly suggested Miss Thorne, rising to go.

"I think now, my dear, as I have always thought, and my opinions generally radiate from fixed principles, which a certain moral independence gives me strength to maintain consistently—*parvenue*, and the daughter and widow of *parvenues*, as I am," said Mrs. Tresham, smiling good-naturedly.

"Good heavens!" thought Miss Thorne, "a mob-cap—a gray-silk dress—in fact, quite a nobody—setting the whole world at utter defiance!"

"Mamma would not be so severe and ultra, I fancy, if she could *hear* more distinctly," observed Miss Tresham, smiling through her agonies. "Her infirmity would not allow her to enjoy the reciprocal delights of society, even if her disposition led her that way."

"You are quite mistaken, daughter," she replied, quickly. "My infirmity, as you call it, has naught to do with the matter; nor is it ever a source of annoyance to me, because it abridges me of no real rational pleasure. I am generally a silent person; and I assure you that, when compelled by circumstances to listen to the uncongenial sounds and hurly-burly of this great world, instead of being thankful that I am deaf in only one ear, I am wicked enough to wish I was deaf in both."

"She is the most strong-minded person I ever met with," whispered Miss Thorne, at the hall door; "but her ideas are all fallacies; depend on it, they are. However, you must not be buried alive on account of them. I'll see to that. You will yet shine as you deserve to do among the *élite* of society; you were

born for it; and it will be contrary to the laws of destiny and nature if you do not. One kiss more—poor dear creature—such odd notions to contend with—good-by." And Miss Thorne flitted out, muttering as she cleared the last marble step, "What intolerable bores! what an immense twaddler that old Tresham is"—and Miss Tresham flitted up to her toilet, murmuring softly, "Exalted friendship, disinterested love—may I be worthy of it all!" while Mrs. Tresham, calm and unmoved, sang in a low, gentle tone of voice, the old-fashioned air of "Kinlock," while she dexterously rounded off the heel of her stocking by her quiet fireside.

CHAPTER XIII.

Hel. Neglect me—lose me—only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love,
Than to be used as you use your dog?

MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM.

As doth the blushing, discontented sun,
From out the fiery portals of the East,
When he perceives that envious clouds are bent
To dim his glory, and to stain the track
Of his bright passage to the occident,
Yet looks he like a king. Behold his eye,
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
Controlling majesty. Alack—alack for woe,
That any harm should stain so bright a show.

KING RICHARD.

TIME glided on, and Walter Shirley was untiring in his will. He paused not, as he wove his spells, and left no art untried to entangle the unsuspicious Edith's affections, or, in some unwary hour, beguile her into promises, from which she could not honorably retreat. He possessed a high order of musical talent—but it was for her alone that he touched the strings of his guitar; or sang in the gloaming the pathetic airs they both loved, like a troubadour of old, to his own poetry. For her he smiled the brightest; and for her the low tender words, revealing the heart's cherished secret, were uttered. Every resource of his gifted mind, and every quality of an evil nature, which seemed formed for deliberate sinning, were called into requisition in the attainment of his coveted object.

Surrounded by fashionable cliques—his senses steeped in the incense of adulation they offered him; considered the most elegant man in society; exclusive in his tastes and habits; disdainful of all who could not boast of birth and the refinements of fashion—the fictitious enjoyments of existence—its sensuality and false philosophy—its irrational conclusions; an utter spirit of selfishness filled up his world! And well he dissembled, when he persuaded the confiding Edith that it was a painful necessity of his position, the being obliged to mingle perpetually in the unreal and vapid *routine* of fashion, to waste so many valuable hours in senseless conventionalities and trifling associations, while his very soul sickened beneath the mask, and yearned for the genuine pleasures of retirement and study—for the precious moments he sometimes dreamed of, when lingering beside her, who knew him so well, he could throw it off with the same glad feeling that a captive hurls away his weary fetters! And she believed and pitied him! Her imagination was dazzled, and ofttimes her judgment fascinated by his smooth pretensions; and her woman's vanity unconsciously flattered by his preferences—but this was all. She would fain have given back in return the full measure of his devotion, and sometimes, while listening to the whisperings of his low, sweet voice, she felt that it would be a somewhat difficult task to analyze her sentiments in his regard; but at these very moments, when pity and interest seemed ripening into a warmer feeling, a remembered word or glance of Harry De Vere's would present itself to her mind, and his image, noble and perfect in its gentle dignity, would steal into her heart, interposing the shield of a pure and unsullied love between its innocency and the dawnings of mere passion or fancy.

But still he charmed her with poetic fancies, and mingled with his storied descriptions of the scenery of those distant classic lands which her glowing fancy had imbued with such a dreamy beauty, the revelation of his hopes, his fears, and love. His relationship to her step-mother imparted a greater appearance of intimacy than in reality existed between Edith and himself, and gave him a privileged position in the family, which he availed himself of at every opportunity. It was already reported, and by many credited as true, that they were plighted to each other, while appearances not only indicated, but confirmed the seeming fact. He was her constant attendant at the crowded *soirées* and balls of the season; together they walked, and drove, and the *empressement* of his manner towards her on every occasion contributed proofs positive to the rumor so propitious to his hopes. But how baffled and confounded would he have felt in the midst of his vain

exultation, could he have penetrated the veil of that young heart—could he have seen her after a brilliant evening, leaning weary, and now ofttimes pale, on her toilet, her gems and flowers gleaming, as if in mockery, around her, and her rich draperies falling unheeded beneath her feet, her thoughts brooding—not over memories of him—but of Harry De Vere—blending *him* with her future; and in her heart's wild dreaming, silently and lovingly following him up each lofty height his noble spirit attained, until her own, strengthened and purified by such ministrations, would grow in every high excellence worthy of such companionship. True, pure affection is ever humble; it loves to cling for support to its object, and at least fancy it of superior worth.

Several times Edith had met him at Mr. Bedford's—there, unrestrained by ceremony, the rich treasures of his mind and heart were revealed with a natural grace which commanded her admiration. The momentary awkwardness of *mauvaise honte* at the beginning of each interview—the beaming forth of his truthful and noble heart through the cloud—the gradual melting away of painful reserve, until, like a sun-burst, the varied powers of his refined intellect were developed, presented to her a novel charm—a new and delightful study; and simple in nature, and true in heart as himself, she sought not to veil beneath that cold hypocrisy established by fashionable laws, and misnamed delicacy, the genuine delight she experienced in his society—a delight softened and subdued by womanly feelings, but so pure and exalted in its nature as to need no concealment. Time after time he had called on her, but generally found her so surrounded by friends and admirers, and gay flutterers, as to leave him no opportunity of exchanging aught beyond the mere compliments of the day and season with her. Once only he found her alone, and the interview, though prolonged far beyond the limits prescribed by *etiquette*, appeared too brief for both. He left her with new hopes dawning on his heart, which opened vistas of such ineffable rapture to him as he never dreamed of before; he *felt* that his sentiments, although unexpressed, were tacitly understood by Edith, and fancied she was too noble in her nature and too true to virtue to encourage hopes which could never be realized. He only wished her position less brilliant—her wealth less abundant—it would have been the pride of his heart to raise her from obscurity to an exalted station, and surround her with every luxury the most refined taste could suggest. But this could not be. He could add nothing to her worldly advantages—he could bestow on her naught beyond an honorable and devoted heart, and unblemished name, even if she favored his suit; but he loved her,

loved her with an intensity far beyond the common love of men. A purer and more self-sacrificing emotion than is usually found on earth ever responded to his thoughts of her, and he felt that in aspiring to her he dared much. A change came over him. He was no longer the shy scholar, avoiding society. Wherever he heard Edith was to be, thither he went; and more than once or thrice his heart thrilled with silent rapture, when he noted her suddenly downcast eyes, her heightened color and smile of welcome, as she recognized him amidst the crowd. All this did not escape Walter Shirley's observation. This mysterious, but eloquent intercourse between kindred hearts, this silent interchange of sympathies, telling more than thousands of words, almost maddened him; hate and revenge mingled their Plutonian bitterness with his schemes; in silence and darkness he plotted ruin and woe to him who had thus dared to cross his path. Fair in his exterior; calm, and always self-possessed, no one could have imagined the blasting storm that was gathering beneath the sunshine. He displayed towards Harry De Vere a most withering indifference of manner, and on several occasions disparaged him to Mrs. Willoughby by the most injurious insinuations. But, notwithstanding his superlative self-esteem and arrogant assumptions, he feared him as a rival in Edith's affections, and determined to crush his presumption, if wile and stratagem could do it.

Once more De Vere sought an interview with Edith. He had heard, for the first time, that day, the report of her engagement. In the course of a single morning, it had been dinned repeatedly in his ears. His mother—his sisters—even Mr. Bedford, although he felt highly dissatisfied with the choice which rumor declared she had made, did not spare him; for he had told his love to none. He considered it too sacred a thing to prate about, or exhibit; therefore, he was not suspected of entertaining a warmer sentiment than admiration for the beautiful heiress. With a heart stirred up to bitter fancies, and saddened by presentiments of evil, he entered her presence, but only to wish his infatuation had led him elsewhere. She was alone with Walter Shirley. He was leaning over the back of her chair; her curls touched his cheeks; his breath mingled with hers, while he pointed out some of the finest views in a folio of engravings which she held, delineations of scenes in Italy which he had just brought her. Her face was lit up with a superb expression of intellectual and dreamy enjoyment, as seer-like he gave life to the pictures by his eloquent descriptions of the various scenes he was familiar with.

"There, Edith, just under the shadow of that hill, I used to moor my skiff on the moonlit waves of the Lagrian Lake, while

those villas on the picturesque heights which surround it looked like great pearls amidst the gloom of the woods. Through the dewy nights I have floated on its waters wherever the tide listed, with no sound to disturb my musings but the plaintive songs of the lonely fisherman, and the rippling of its starry billows about the prow of my skiff. There is Lago Maggiore, sunny and beautiful, with its gem-like isles. You should see *that* at sunset, gleaming in sapphire and crimson, while the sky, like a gemmed pavilion, draped with purple tissues, smiles sweetly and lovingly down on it. There, Edith, there is VENICE. Like a queen, she sits throned on the sea, crowned with a thousand spires of lustrous marble, and gilded fanes and palaces:

> 'Along her narrow streets
> The tides of ocean ebb and flow—'

while the chant of the gondolieri, the music of stringed instruments, and the harmonious rippling of waves against the ancient palace walls, are the only sounds we hear. I used to go out at midnight in my gondola, and, dreaming of its ancient splendors, awed by its solemn beauty, as I floated along the lagune, linger until sunrise crimsoned the sea, and burnished with gold every lofty point. Then methought I beheld, in the distance, the *Bucentaur* and its magnificent train of gondolas, crowded with the beauty and chivalry of Venice, coming forth with music and banners to witness the mystic nuptials of the sea. But these visions were only morning clouds, stirred into motion by the winds, which soon dispelled their gilded phantasms. There is Leghorn, the city of the magnificent Medicis. That is Petrarch's villa. It is in Arqua, on the northern side of a fine hill, commanding a view of the whole fertile valley that winds through the Eugenean hills—those hills, once the abode of soothsayers and sybils—"

"Good morning, Mr. De Vere," said Edith, closing the folio when he was announced, while a blush mantled her cheeks—a blush of welcome, which he construed into one of confusion.

"I hope Miss Willoughby is quite well this morning," he said calmly, as he seated himself, and fixed his clear, penetrating eyes on hers.

"I *am* well, thank you; but Mr. Shirley has been pointing out to me some of his old European haunts, which have wrought me up to such a fever of enthusiasm that nothing less than a personal visit will allay. I fear the perils of the sea, but think I must some day brave them all, for the purpose of exploring the classic and glorious haunts of these lands; these old, dreamy lands," she said, smiling.

"We will go, Edith," said Walter Shirley, in a low voice, but quite loud enough for De Vere to hear him. "As your cicerone, I shall feel more than repaid, by hearing your enthusiastic admiration, and watching the effect of each lovely scene on you."

"I beg that I may not interrupt your imaginary tour, Miss Willoughby," he said.

"Not at all. We can resume it some other time," said Shirley, with a supercilious air.

"Certainly we can," remarked Edith. "Tell me, Mr. De Vere, how Bessie is. I hear Mr. Aubry, the southern Adonis, is her devoted?"

"My sister is quite well, I am obliged to you. As to the report relative to Mr. Aubry, I cannot enlighten you. Rumors are, however, the forerunners of realities sometimes. It may be so," he replied.

"Always making due allowance for unlimited exaggeration, they may possibly be a foreshadowing of coming events," said Edith, coloring.

"She is heartless," he thought. "I have been deceived by the illusions of my own credulous fancies. But can it be that those eyes, looking so unclouded into mine, veil a false heart? The thought is agony. She may never have loved me; but to think of her as a trifler, all unworthy of a generous affection, would be a bitter pang." During the few minutes longer that he lingered, his manner was cold, and restrained within the chilling bounds of mere civility, while, in his secret heart, he cursed the illusion that had afforded him such a mockery of rapture. Edith noted the change, and wondered at it, while she endeavored, under a gay demeanor, to conceal the pain it inflicted. Walter Shirley, with his demon-like perceptions, so keen and sentient, read each heart and exulted. He addressed a few remarks, in a tone of condescending politeness, to De Vere, who, deeply stung, replied haughtily and almost discourteously; then, turning to Edith with an unmoved countenance, made some casual remark, his manner giving it a significance which implied mutual confidence between them. All the pride of Harry De Vere's nature was roused; he could scarcely conceal the contempt he felt for the subtle, sinuous character of his smooth rival; and fearing, if he remained longer, he might, in an unguarded moment, give him an advantage, by the betrayal of some of the bitter emotions of his heart, he made his adieu inan abrupt and hurried manner.

"How excessively churlish genius makes one! Now, that fellow De Vere is unquestionably a sort of intellectual wonder; but utterly wanting in that nice tact which is innate in a well-bred

gentleman. 'Pon honor, *ma belle* Edith, a stranger might have fancied him a jealous lover; he looked as if he would annihilate me," laughed Walter Shirley.

"Your standard of good breeding, Mr. Shirley, is measured, I fancy, by mere fashionable rules. Mine, perhaps, is somewhat more elevated," replied Edith, coldly. "Mr. De Vere's remarkable talents and virtues place him far—far beyond such hypercritical distinctions, and the unworthy sentiments you have ascribed to him."

"Bravo! Edith," exclaimed Mr. Bedford, who had come in unannounced. "Good morning, Mr. Shirley. May we never want a friend to defend us when absent! If I had some of my famous white port here, I'd toast you in a brimmer, sweetheart! Where is De Vere? I expected to find him here."

"He left only a few minutes ago," replied Edith, looking down.

"Zounds! how unlucky. I am truly sorry I missed him. A deputation of citizens are waiting at my house now for an interview with him. They went first to his place of business, and learned from some one there that he was with me. I invited them to wait a half hour, and started off in pursuit; stopped at fifty different places; and finally remembered that he told me last evening he intended to call here this morning. It will certainly be a great disappointment if they do not see him in time," said Mr. Bedford, looking worried.

"Is Mr. De Vere a political character?" asked Walter Shirley.

"No, sir; he's a *patriotic character;* a rare thing in these degenerate times. He belongs to the dominant party; but would have the moral courage to sacrifice the petty prejudices of partisan feeling to public utility and national honor at any moment. He's a perfect Curtius, that fellow; he'd leap into the gulf a willing and noble victim, sir, if a crisis demanded sacrifice for the salvation of his country. Have you seen, pray, the articles over the signature of 'Quintus,' which have appeared twice or thrice a week in the 'Free Press?'"

"Yes; I have not only read them, but heard them more talked of than any newspaper articles ever published in this country. They advocated strenuously and eloquently the measures which the author proposed for State reform. His plans, it is thought, will place our State Institutions on a firm and impregnable basis. Do you know the author?" asked Shirley.

"Yes; I know him well. He would fain hoodwink the world, as Junius did, respecting his identity; but I have betrayed his secret; taken off his mask, until all the leading men about

town know him, and give due honor to his extraordinary talents. Harry De Vere is his name," replied Mr. Bedford, rubbing his hands furiously together.

Walter Shirley started, and bit his lip. His path was again crossed by the low-born De Vere. No sooner did his star seem rising to the ascendant than, with broader and brighter light, the planet of the other's destiny scaled the arc above it. How dare he, a fellow of yesterday, compete with one so privileged by birth and *caste* as himself? His rage baffled description; and, in silence, he watched the effect of Mr. Bedford's announcement on Edith; but, better for his peace, had he turned away from such a study. She involuntarily threw back her beautiful head, and, for an instant, looked as if she gloried in the justly earned fame of her heart's choice; an exulting joy kindled a wonderful light in her dark eyes, and her cheeks glowed in the dawning radiance of his future career; then she remembered his cold, changed manner; a sigh rose from her bosom; the light faded from her eyes; the crimson from her cheeks, leaving it a shade paler than its usual tint, and her countenance somewhat sadder.

"Such a brilliant genius will doubtless thunder in the Senate at no distant day," sneered Walter Shirley.

"If the interests of his country demand his services, he will be no laggard, depend on't. With his sound, high-toned views, his talents and pure-hearted patriotism, he may, with good reason, aspire to high degrees in the Republic!" said Mr. Bedford, tartly. "Harry De Vere is no carpet-knight, let me tell you; the cultivation of science, and public utility, are his noble aims. There is a mass meeting called for in the great city square to-night, as you are probably aware, and the people, whose friend and advocate he is, are determined he shall address them; for this purpose the deputation have waited on him."

"But I understood the Attorney-General and Graham, our distinguished jurists, were to address the meeting. Would not their eloquence suffice for the 'unwashed sovereigns?'" inquired Shirley, contemptuously.

"I suppose not," said Mr. Bedford, drily. "'Quintus' expressed the views and feelings of these two eminent men in such a sound, logical way, in his admirable articles, that they, as well as the people, ask his aid; but I must be gone. Edith, where is Mrs. Willoughby?"

"Gone out with Mrs. Lacy, I believe. They have three or four poor families under their especial care, to whom mamma gives employment, and, consequently, relief. Some are maimed and some sick among them; and, when found out in their wretched

haunts, were in the last stage of destitution and want; now they are comfortable," replied Edith, her fine countenance once more lit up with its old expression.

"The world purifies Miriam Willoughby!" exclaimed Mr. Bedford, proudly.

"Say, rather, an experience of its cheating illusions—its unreal sources of enjoyment, which, flow as brightly as they may, are bitterer than wormwood," whispered a voice in his ear, as he stood holding open the drawing-room door. He turned instantly, but only in time to see Mrs. Willoughby gliding up the broad hall-stairs to her apartment. He was silent, and, nodding to Edith, departed with a sadder feeling than when he came. He could never endure to hear her refer to the griefs of former days.

He found Harry De Vere in time to carry him back, in triumph, to the deputation of citizens. He would have modestly declined the honor, but felt it due to his principles to defend and support them in person when thus called on. Acclamation after acclamation welcomed him that night when he arose, after the conclusion of the addresses of the Attorney-General and the great jurist, Graham. The people recognized him as *one of themselves;* long had they known him, in his secret acts, as their *friend;* now they beheld him the able champion of their rights and privileges, who, in practically sustaining the dignity of labor, elevated them; and who, knowing their wants, would independently maintain their principles, and bravely defend their cause, or die in the breach! His triumph, all unsought, was like an ovation; while the modest dignity of his demeanor enhanced its value tenfold. But the applause of thousands, ringing like pæans on the night air; the hearty congratulations of men whose long experience, eminent talents, and public worth gave true value to their words, and the whispering of gratified ambition, would have been unsatisfactory in the extreme, had not the "still, small voice" of conscience uttered its unerring sentence of approval. Pure, and entertaining the loftiest regard for the principles he advocated, the RIGHT was his idol; for that alone the energies of his mind labored. In the progress and success of RIGHT, he alone sought his reward. His was one of those rare spirits which seem to be created expressly for the exigency of the times; to repair the broken links in the chain of a nation's strength! But here we must leave him, his political virtues, and his triumph, and return to our legitimate story of the HEART.

"Edith," said Mrs. Willoughby, one day when they were sitting alone after breakfast, enjoying the quiet comfort which preceded the visiting hours, "I have waited in vain to hear your

secret from yourself. The world talks of it as a settled thing, and I am everywhere met with congratulations and compliments on your approaching marriage."

"If I have a secret, mamma, the world is at fault," she replied, while her heart sank within her. "If you allude to the report of my engagement to Walter, *that* is so utterly unfounded that I scarcely gave it a second thought."

"But I must say, Edith, that you have encouraged him to a degree which has compromised you seriously. You cannot feel indifferent towards him," observed Mrs. Willoughby.

"No, mamma, not indifferent. I have sometimes thought, when under the spell of Walter's fascinations, that I felt a decided preference for him; but this sentiment was inconstant, so inconstant that I feared it," she replied, sadly.

"Then you have not absolutely decided whether or not you can return his affection? It is well, dear, to be extremely cautious and prudent in affairs of the heart; their results govern a lifetime of misery or joy, you know. But, Edith, it is assuming more than the prerogatives of our sex; it is infringing on its gentle delicacy, and trifling with the happiness of another to encourage a true affection only to experiment with it," observed her step-mother.

"Dear mamma, indeed you wrong me! I am not so heartless a thing as that, believe me!" exclaimed Edith, while her eyes filled up. "Walter has often declared, when I have told him in kind, but decided terms, that I could never be his, that if I allowed him still the privileges of a friend he would be content. How could I refuse so small a boon? how could I deprive him of that which he declares, next to my love, he most prizes?"

"Such friendships, my simple-hearted Edith, under such circumstances are dangerous. But if it ends in the discovery that a warmer feeling than mere friendship lurks in your heart for poor Walter, I will be well pleased with the event. He is a high-minded man, a polished gentleman, and a cultivated, finished scholar. Could you fancy him, he will be a fitting match for you, one that I could highly approve of. I love my nephew; he is, I believe, worthy of my affection; but withal, Edith, I would not for the wealth of worlds influence you in this thing!" said Mrs. Willoughby.

"Oh, mamma! when the heart is divided——" exclaimed Edith, then paused and covered her burning face with her hands.

"I understand not your meaning, Edith. I can only suspect it. Had I your confidence I might aid you, but I do not demand it. If you have a secret from me, still conceal it, unless you are

quite willing to reveal it, more especially if it is an unsought, unrequited attachment," said the lady, coldly.

"Not quite unsought—oh, no, no. I could not be so unwomanly. But oh, mamma, speak not—look not coldly on me, my best friend—pity me! It is all past now! The dream is over, never, never to return!" said Edith, in a low, trembling voice.

"I am your friend, darling. The happiness of your life is the chief object of mine. Right glad am I that this hopeless dream is over. May it never return, never, my Edith! The realization of it would have been productive of keen suffering to us both, that is, if the whispers I heard have reference to it. But, *àpropos*—I like to have forgotten the thing entirely. I received a formal proposal for your hand this morning after the most approved French style, couched in a profusion of extravagance; written in French, of course, and surrounded by Cupid's arrows and roses in the most bewildering mass," said Mrs. Willoughby, smoothing back the curls from Edith's forehead.

"May I ask who has honored me so highly?" she said, trying to smile.

"No less a personage, my love, than Monsieur Frederick De Vere! I scarcely know whether to regard it as a compliment or an affront. The presumption of the individual is unparalleled! Could he have for a moment supposed you would stoop to such a *mésalliance?*" asked Mrs. Willoughby, in an indignant tone.

"I scarcely know him. Of course, dear mamma, you will decline the honor. There are more important objections to an alliance with Mr. Frederick De Vere than his *parvenue* origin; the most decided of which is, a total want of what he would call *le sentiment divin* in his favor," said Edith, composedly.

"There is one redeeming feature in that family," observed Mrs. Willoughby, after a pause, "and that is, their ability to point to Mr. Henry De Vere as a scion of their senseless stock. Him I admire and respect. He is far beyond the mediocre set who flutter in society, and selfishly glad am I that it is not on him the pain of a refusal is to be inflicted, as of course it would be, had he proposed. These *mésalliances* create unhappiness from the very fact of their unfitness. I have a peculiar horror of these De Veres; not because they are, in fashionable parlance, 'new people,' but they are so essentially vulgar; their aims so little and low. A connection with them would be degrading to a woman of family and sense."

It was Mrs. Willoughby's foible, this sort of pride, and she would have immolated herself on its altar, had occasion required it. She thoroughly despised pretension and vulgar ostentation.

In society, she tolerated it as a thing from which she could at any moment escape; but the idea of introducing it by close relations to her hearth-stone, to flourish rankly beneath her roof, was insupportable. Her mind, generous in all things else, suggested no liberal apology for a want of gentle breeding; low birth and vulgarity were synonymous with her; and her pride of character, her very truthfulness, would not permit her to assimilate herself with antagonistic principles, which caused every nice and refined sentiment of her nature to shrink into a fold of impenetrable reserve. Walter Shirley had twice insinuated to her, in that natural, sincere way he could so well assume, the designs, as he called them, of Harry De Vere on Edith's heart; he gave his every act a false coloring, and imputed motives to him which he would have scorned as something of less account than the dust beneath his feet; and concluded by hinting a kindly fear lest these arts "should at last entangle her unsuspicious nature under their specious influences." Then he added, "Just imagine, my dear aunt, Mrs. De Vere boasting, to a select coterie, that her son Harry would at last carry off the heiress."

But Mrs. De Vere, with all her follies, was guiltless of this. She was too much occupied with her French son, and the establishment of her daughters, to trouble herself about Harry, who never evinced the slightest interest in *her* plans; although she could not help feeling amazed, sometimes, at the way he was getting on, and piqued at Miss Willoughby's seeming to prefer his society to Frederick's, and had once or twice remarked it; but beyond this, her obtuse perceptions did not soar.

These false insinuations corresponded so entirely with Mrs. Willoughby's preconceived ideas of the people that she never for a moment doubted their correctness, and they sank lower than ever in her estimation, while she determined to watch Edith closely; and, if her conduct towards Harry De Vere indicated the shadow of a preference, to warn her in time of the gulf it would place between them. Hence her philippic against unequal marriages. The occasion of Frederick De Vere's proposal had given her an opportunity of saying all she wished on the subject, and her mind was greatly relieved when she heard from Edith's own lips a confirmation of her hope that no probability of such a thing existed. Her words, so earnest and truthful, "The dream is over, never—never to return!" were a sufficient guarantee to her, that, even if a passing fancy had ever inclined her heart towards him, it had not ripened into that high and holy affection which would test bitterly the heart's endurance, if opposed. Mrs. Willoughby sought to penetrate the mystery of Edith's heart no further; it was indifferent

to her what cause had dispelled her vision of love; it was over, and although she felt a momentary pity when she thought of the pang that must have followed this first heart-blight, she was content; her pride was appeased, and Edith was her own again. But poor Edith! She felt that the fiat had been uttered from which there was no appeal, and an icy feeling crept around her heart until it throbbed so faintly she thought it was freezing. Now her position with regard to Harry De Vere was doubly hopeless; and all her womanly feelings suggested to her the propriety of forgetting him, as he had already seemed to forget her. Why should her thoughts hover around one whose inconsistency of conduct convinced her that she had been regarded merely as a bright and passing fancy? Added to these thoughts, her step-mother's influence, always potent, the more so now, because it operated on a subdued and wounded spirit, decided her course. She spent the rest of the day in her chamber under the plea of headache, that most convenient of all feminine sufferings, with no other companion than her own bitter thoughts. She did not exaggerate the genuine anguish of her heart by the indulgence of sentimental repinings; even tears, so interesting on such occasions, refused their kindly aid in softening the harshness of the blow; and hour after hour she sat thinking and thinking until her brain ached, how she might best strengthen and heal her wounded spirit. This was wise; to learn endurance is something, even if it brings no interior peace with it; and although Edith still felt the iron in her heart, she felt, too, that she could bear all in silence. Towards evening she opened her door to admit her maid, Paula, who brought her a delicious cluster of flowers from Walter Shirley, in the midst of which she found a twisted strip of paper containing a few words of anxious solicitude.

Woe betide the stricken soul when the tempter comes under the guise of the consoler!

"Poor Walter! How ungrateful I am for all your unselfish love!" Then fell her tears fast and heavily among the brilliant leaves, for the thought of one now lost to her forever mingled still with the tide of memory, making it like Marah's wave, dark and bitter.

And when a few days after he again pleaded in his own peculiarly eloquent and touching way for her love, when he offered his life's devotion for her acceptance, *he was not refused.* Thus far he triumphed.

Once, soon after, she called to see Mr. Bedford, and found him *tête-à-tête* with Harry De Vere. She entered the door before she saw him, and could not without the most awkward impropriety go

back. He arose immediately, and bowing with proud courtesy, handed her a chair; then telling Mr. Bedford he had an engagement, departed without a glance—without a word. Piqued and hurt, she exhibited a demeanor quite as proud as his own, and as he left her presence, again his heart whispered in its agony, "She is unworthy, she is heartless!"

"Hoity, toity—a new way for friends to meet and part!" exclaimed Mr. Bedford. "How is it, Etha? I don't understand at all the manners of this generation. What is the reason Harry flew off at such a tangent, when I know a month or so ago he would have given his head for such an opportunity of a social interview. What has he done, in the name of the stars?"

"Nothing," replied Edith, smiling; but how hollow was that smile! "I am not accountable, I fancy, for Mr. De Vere's strange vagaries. Had I known he was with you, I would have made Mrs. Grimshaw a morning call."

"Humph! I never knew before that Harry De Vere had any vagaries. But you women-kind get so very discerning the moment your fancies are diverted by some newer object from an old admirer; the poor cast-off devil is endowed with every evil quality under the sun, and shunned like a leper," said Mr. Bedford, thoroughly vexed at the way she spoke of his favorite.

"Pardon me, my dear Mr. Bedford. I intended no offence. But I think it passing strange, I confess, that you who know so well the changeful whims of our sex should ever feel the slightest astonishment at our inconsistencies! Mr. De Vere is a proper young man," said Edith, endeavoring to hide her real suffering beneath a veil of gayety.

"And that smooth Shirley a most *im*proper one, Etha!" broke in Mr. Bedford, provoked by her coolness. He little knew the painful thoughts he had stirred up, or he would have taken her to his breast like a stricken bird, and poured balm on the wounds he was bruising. "But I won't quarrel with you; he's a handsome, insinuating fellow. I only hope he'll make you happy, my darling."

"I hope so; though happiness is a blossom of rare growth on earth," she said, sadly.

"What! Eh! Is this Etha? Moralizing—sententious! What's the matter, Etha?" asked Mr. Bedford, taking her hands in his, and looking earnestly into her face.

"Nothing, dear Mr. Bedford; absolutely nothing. I could not always be a child, you know, or carol forever in blithesome songs like the old mocking-bird at Woodreve," she replied, trying

to smile; but the effort was vain, and she burst into heartfelt tears.

"Etha—Edith Willoughby, answer me truly. Are you happy? Is your engagement to Walter Shirley altogether voluntary—have you not been influenced? I fear it, child. If it is so, tell me. I conjure you by your hopes of happiness, tell me! And at the very altar I'd rescue you single-handed from such a fate!" said Mr Bedford, solemnly.

"This engagement is the result of my own deliberate and voluntary act," she replied, in a low voice. "My nature would scarcely brook undue interference in an affair of this kind." And so she in truth thought. Had she felt for a moment that she had been duped—sacrificed to interested and selfish ends—the victim of a tissue of falsehood and base insinuations, she would calmly and proudly have disentangled the net, and with the most blighting contempt put it beneath her feet. But she did not know; there was none to tell her; her human eye could not penetrate the cloud, although her heart heard wild and prophetic whisperings, forewarnings, undefinable things like dreams, which bid her beware, which terrified her with phantoms of ruined, blasted hopes. But these were unreal all, and although they disturbed her, she heeded them not.

Mr. Bedford sighed deeply, for the human countenance was an unsealed book to him, and he read in Edith's a certain expression which convinced him that she was herself deceived or wished to deceive him. While he regarded her as she sat lost in thought, her pale cheek leaning on her hand, and her large, bright eyes downcast, the door opened, and Mrs. Willoughby tottered in so pale and haggard that they both sprang forward to assist her to the sofa, where she leaned against the pillars gasping and unable to speak. Edith chafed her hands and untied her bonnet-strings, calling on her by the most endearing epithets and gentle caresses to tell them if she could the cause of her illness; but not until Mr. Bedford ran to the bellrope, and was about ringing for assistance did she exhibit any sign of intelligence; then with a frantic gesture she commanded him to desist, and beckoned him to her side.

"Vernon—or—my son—lives!" she whispered, then with a loud shriek clasped her hands on her forehead, and fell back in a state of utter insensibility.

CHAPTER XIV.

Randulph.—You hold too heinous a respect for grief.
Constance.—*He* talks to me that never had a son.
KING JOHN.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY, accompanied by Mrs. Lacy, had been that morning to examine some old European pictures which belonged to a Mr. Moysa, a respectable Israelite, who was engaged in the auction and commission business in the southern section of the city. A reputed Carlo Dolci and Paul Veronese were among the collection, which had thrown connoisseurs and lovers of the fine arts into a delightful state of excitement. Crowds of persons had visited them, and it was quite the fashion to be enraptured on the occasion. Mrs. Willoughby and her friend had chosen an early hour to go, that they might inspect the paintings uninterruptedly. They found only a few artists and one or two connoisseurs discussing the origin and merits of the pictures, many of which were really fine. The Carlo Dolci seemed to obtain but little credit among them as a Carlo Dolci, although it was thought to be a fine, close copy; but the Paul Veronese exhibited such indubitable proofs of being an original that every one was in raptures with it. Mr. Moysa came forward very courteously when he saw the ladies, and offered his services as cicerone through the rooms. He pointed out little gems of painting, and various curiosities of art, which would otherwise have escaped their notice, and conversed so intelligently and judiciously on the fine arts, and illustrated his opinions with such correct taste; and withal there was so little of the Shylock Jew about him—although his black, piercing eyes, high, narrow forehead and fine aquiline nose, indicated his nation—that they were reluctantly preparing to go, when he informed them that he had a collection of curious medallions, paintings, and several rare articles of *virtu* in his private apartment, which it would afford him pleasure to show them. "I perceive, ladies," he continued, leading the way to his *sanctum*, "that you both possess a combination of highly cultivated taste and a nice discrimination, which enable you to judge with prompt correctness between counterfeits and originals, and you will honor me by looking over these *curios*, which I do not often exhibit. I would have been an artist myself, but it is the curse of our nation to be obliged to delve among the sordid things of earth." An expression of sad-

ness darkened his countenance; but it flitted away like a shadow; and opening the doors of a large cabinet that was almost hidden in a niche in the wall of his apartment, he revealed its concealed treasures to his gratified visitors, and appeared more than rewarded in his efforts to contribute to their pleasure, by their high appreciation of the worth of his hoarded gems of art.

"I confess," he observed, "that the paintings of those old Frankish masters, whose pencils have immortalized art, are my especial favorites. Here is a genuine Breughel. I obtained it with great difficulty and at an immense cost, many years ago, in Flanders. The foreshortening is extraordinary. There is not an inharmonious line or tint in the whole picture. This is a Cuyp. I am indebted to the misrule of the House of Nassau, in the Netherlands, for this. The guilders that it cost me prevented the failure of a brave Belgé. I believe it is the only one in this country. But this Titian, ladies. Look at that Madonna! Her head, inclined a little forward, seems to stand out from the frame. One almost fancies he sees a tremulous motion of the robe that covers her breast, while her countenance, oh! the rapt vision that made her believe herself the mother of the Messiah, broods like a divine light over it. And the holy prophet-child. Adonai! How solemnly beam forth those eyes on the gazer! All else—the mouth, like a half-folded rose-leaf; the round, dimpled chin; the faultless outline of the brightly-tinted cheeks, are the perfection of a human ideal of infantile loveliness—but those eyes, they make one shrink back."

"They are like the dawn of morning tinting with glory the twilight hills. They tell us, by their beaming, that night and its shadows are fled for aye, and shed down inexhaustible founts of pity and forgiveness over the whole earth," cried Mrs. Lacy, unable to control her feelings. Again gathered the saturnine cloud over the Jew's face, and, compressing his lips, he replaced the Titian in the cabinet without uttering a word. Then he unfolded a narrow door, almost hidden and far back, and drew forth from a dark recess a magnificent golden goblet, of large and perfect dimensions.

"The cunning hand of that wizard of art, Benvenuto Cellini, fashioned it," he observed, handing it to Mrs. Willoughby. "It was stolen from Rome by some of Bonaparte's rapacious soldiery, with many other splendid relics of art, and carried to Paris. There it was pledged to one of my brethren for an immense sum; but it was never redeemed by the personage who placed it in his keeping. In the stirring events of the times, he either forgot it or fell in bat-

tle. I grudged not a *louis d'or* that I parted with in exchange for it."

"If such master-spirits could live forever!" exclaimed Mrs. Lacy, almost beside herself with enthusiasm.

"Mortals would deify themselves, forgetting the Master Spirit that fashioned them," said Mrs. Willoughby, yielding to the ruling influence of the moment; but fearing she had perpetrated something like *cant*, which was one of her peculiar aversions, she added, "It would be more rational, Caro, to wish that each succeeding century could produce a great master, such as those the world will see no more."

"I have," said Mr. Moysa, looking anxiously in the various drawers and nooks of his cabinet, "a very singular antique medallion, which, I am confident, has a secret spring somewhere about it; but it has baffled my ingenuity completely. I would like the ladies to see it, but fear I have mislaid it. If it belonged to me, I should consider it an invaluable *bijou;* but it was brought to me under peculiar circumstances that give it unusual interest."

"If it is not a business secret, may I ask you to relate those circumstances, Mr. Moysa?" said Mrs. Willoughby, forever on the *qui vive* for the slightest clue leading to the recovery of her lost son. The bare mention of a medallion with a secret spring was quite enough to arouse every maternal hope and fear in her breast, and she listened with throbbing pulse to the brief recital.

"I will relate the circumstances with pleasure, ladies; but I pray you be seated," replied Mr. Moysa, wheeling around two leather-cushioned chairs from his table. "I was sitting alone, one evening about five months ago, in my private room, looking over the daily paper, when my young man came in and told me that a distressed and youthful foreigner importuned to see me. It was my hour of rest from the fatigues of business, which I allowed no common event to encroach on; but, after reflecting a moment that it might be a poor, down-trodden outcast of Israel who needed aid; or perchance a Gentile, whose poverty or misfortunes made him even worse than a Jew in the estimation of his fellow-Christians—pardon me, ladies, if I speak with bitterness, I *have seen much*—I ordered my assistant to bring him up. I have, I believe, a natural love for the beautiful and picturesque. A touch of grace in a beggar, or a line of beauty beneath their tatters, arrests my eye immediately. Imagine, then, the interest and admiration I felt, as I gazed on the stripling who entered my presence. He was tall, and gracefully formed. His thin, half-worn habiliments could not conceal the harmonious and statuesque proportions of his person; and withal there was such a sad, imploring

look in his large blue eyes, and his golden hair fell in such a cloud of light about his face and shoulders, that I involuntarily arose to salute him—thinking of the angels of God, who, under the guise of men, used to walk among my people. He was very pale, and yet there was more of innate pride in his whole demeanor than humility.

"'What is your business, boy?' I asked, pointing to a chair, which, however, he would not take. A deep crimson hue dyed his face, and he looked with a keen glance at me, as if he would, in reading my very soul, calculate his chances for insult or aid. I commanded every muscle to an impassible expression, while I waited for his reply. But he was still silent.

"'Do you speak English?' I inquired.

"'Some Englis I talk, senor,' he replied in a singularly musical voice.

"'Are you a Jew?'

"'No, no! oh no! Senor!' he cried, in a voice of alarm, and taking from his bosom a small ivory crucifix, which he extended towards me—'no, Senor; no Jew; here do I hope!'

"'What then brought you hither? I am a Jew!' I said sternly. He pressed the emblem of his creed to his lips, then clasping it closely in his hand thrust it again in his bosom, holding it there, as if he feared I would tear it from him, and bowing low, turned to go away.

"'Stop; I have a human heart, boy, Jew though I be. Come back, and tell me how I can befriend you. I will have no Ishmaels wandering from my tent into the world's wide wilderness to perish. Sit down, and do not fear me,' I said.

"He understood all that I said, for a soft, placid smile settled on his face, and he came nearer to me. 'I thought, senor!' he said, unfastening a small leather bag that hung with *agnus deis*, and medals, suspended by a black cord around his neck, from which he took the medallion I spoke of just now—'you might lend me one little money, and keep this, until I make pictures enough to sell and pay you to get it back.'

"I examined it, but found that its intrinsic value was not great, though as a curious and antique relic it was a prize. 'Do you know,' I asked, 'that if I lend you money on this bauble, and do not receive it again in three months, it will be sold?'"

"'Oh, senor! I would die if I lost it. Since I was a little child in Rome, I always had it. It is my friend; see, I carved the name of "*Maria*" on it, and wore it on my heart. I will starve. I cannot beg!' he said earnestly.

"'You will do neither! Can you paint pictures?' I inquired.

"'Oh yes, senor. I am of Rome!' he said proudly. 'Michael Angelo, Raphael, Lorraine, Rubens, Carlo Dolci, were my masters. Oh! their pictures, so grand, so beautiful; they were my friends; I had no other in Rome after *de profundis* was sung over *his* body—'

"'Whose body?' I inquired.

"'One good artist. He was Englis. He found me at Naples. Oh! he was very kind; he make me to go with him to Rome; he loved me; I mixed his colors; I did all for him I could do; he taught me much; but, *miserere!* he died at last.'

"'So! so! He died, did he? Very well, you must find another friend. You shall paint a picture for me; mind, no daub, but a picture worthy of one who has studied the old masters at Rome. Here are ten dollars I will pay you in advance. You may keep your treasure!' I said, handing it to him.

"A gleam of joy lit up his face and as suddenly faded. 'You keep it, senor. I will very soon come with the picture; then, *bello-amico,*' he said, pressing the medallion to his lips, 'you come back to my heart.' He replaced it in my hand, and received the money. But I have not seen him since. Owing to the failure of the person who owned the property I occupied, it was sold, and the rent raised to such an exorbitant price by the purchaser that I forthwith moved. It is more than probable that the poor fellow cannot find me out. I advertised several times a line or two in the daily papers, which I knew would inform him, if he saw them, of my removal and present location, conveying also a request for him to call for his property. But I have never heard a single word of him. He is either dead or gone away."

Mrs. Willoughby had listened with intense interest to the narrative of the benevolent Jew. Hope conjured up a thousand probabilities as he proceeded; her heart throbbed almost to bursting, while her cheek grew whiter and more marble like than ever. But when he uttered the words, "*dead, or gone away,*" she could scarcely stifle a shriek of agony; she felt so suddenly bereft of hope—the clue she supposed in her wild fancies that she had discovered, to be lost, broken, at the very moment it was found—was a thought of insupportable anguish. But she did not speak. Above all that wild emotion, there was a calm, and stillness, like snows on a volcano. The twisting, writhing, the bitterness of her strained heart chords performed their awful mystery in silence and dread, while Mrs. Lacy, who had no other interest in the matter than what the sweet affinities of humanity suggested, wept.

"He was no impostor, of that I am certain!" continued Mr. Moysa confidently; "or he would never have left with me so

highly prized a thing, when he was at liberty to take it with him. I would stake my right hand on his truth. Such a face as his could never lie. But where can the medallion be hidden?"

"What was the name of the poor boy artist?" asked Mrs. Lacy, while every line of her face was instinct with feeling. "I wish we could find him, from my inmost heart I do!"

"There's the rub, lady. For the life of me I cannot remember it. He told me, and I intended recording it immediately; but the fact is that I was very much engrossed when he came in with a great speech of one of our greatest men, Webster; and the moment he left my *sanctum*, I resumed the paper, thinking it was time enough for so trifling an affair as writing a simple name on my books, when I had concluded the grandest speech that was ever made before an American Senate. But I was carried away, quite away like Elijah, on the fiery chariot of the great statesman's eloquence; beyond the clouds of prejudice, and narrow illiberality it bore me, until all mundane thoughts were forgotten, and among them, the name of my *poor* wandering artist. Aha! here is the medallion!" said Mr. Moyss, placing it in Mrs. Willoughby's eagerly extended hand. *It was the identical one that Vernon had given her years ago*, and which hung around her child's arm when he was stolen! There was the tiny diamond that concealed the spring, the same enamelled pattern that made hers remarkable. She hastily drew the one containing Vernon's miniature from her bosom, where she had always worn it, and compared the two. There could be no mistake. She pressed the spring, and the medallion flew open, revealing, in colors as fresh as if painted yesterday, her own likeness. The shock was too great; it fell from her hands, and she sank back fainting on Mrs. Lacy's bosom. Restoratives were applied instantly, but it was long ere she recovered from the swoon. When she did, it was only one wild glance she threw around; it was only one shudder that convulsed her frame, and she remembered all.

"I am better," she said, collecting all the powers of her will to seem so; "I would there had been no witnesses of my weakness—but it was so unforeseen. Respect the woe, my friends, which is a mystery to you both. These relics are the only fragments of the wreck spared by the storm. The recovery, so strange, of *this*, has revived bitter memories. Look at it, Caroline Lacy. Whose features are here delineated?"

"Yours, doubtless, my dearest friend. Expression, features, and air, are decidedly yours," replied Mrs. Lacy, filled with wonder at the whole scene. "But despond not. *I* should regard this strange discovery as a harbinger of good. I don't know its history, but

perchance we may discover this young foreigner, and persuade him to relinquish the medallion."

"I wish, lady, that I felt at liberty to return it to you; but it would kill that poor boy if he came and found it gone. If he is living, he will certainly reclaim it. I am convinced that it is your property. The close resemblance of the miniature to you, and the same initials carved on both, are indisputable evidences of the fact," said Mr. Moysa, comparing the two. "If it is of any importance to you to see the poor young fellow, I will not rest until he is found."

"Sir, I would sacrifice every worldly advantage to see him, to find him. You don't know the obligation you would lay me under by introducing him to me. I would not take this medallion out of your possession under existing circumstances on any account; keep it, if there is the remotest hope of his returning to claim it, and notify me immediately. Here is my address. But let me implore you to regard this whole affair as confidential."

"My honor is your guaranty, madam," said Mr. Moysa, gravely.

"It is one that may be trusted, I verily believe, sir. Would that all who profess the creed of Christians practised its divine precepts in the same spirit that you do! Caro, dear, I feel strangely shaken; let us go. Leave me at Mr. Bedford's, and drive home alone. I must see him without delay. Farewell, Mr. Moysa," she said, extending her hand to the Jew.

The JEW! What scenes of contumely, ages of ruin, what deathless scorn and ever active maledictions, what oppressions and woes, what wanderings and hopeless agonies, are conjured up by that little word! First of all, Jerusalem throned like a queen among nations! Golgotha and its sinless victim, the reckless and frenzied shouts of multitudes ravening for his sacred blood, defying omnipotence in their frantic mood to seal his curse and its *stigmata* on them and their children. Onward rolls the awful vision; lurid flashes, lighting up the terrific ruin when Heaven and men warred together amidst its stricken and faded glories, fill the soul with dread; while like the roaring of the sea swell the triumphant pæans of the Roman cohorts, led on by the proud form of the son of Vespasian, who guides his jewelled barb over the desecrated and ruined Holy of Holies! Signs of fire fill the air, awful shapes of flame and cloud, shrieks, wails, death groans, mingled with curses, rise at the bidding of that talismanic word on the imagination! The golden banners of Judah, filled with dust and blood, flutter no more from the stately ramparts; but torn and trampled, lay low; humiliation, and chains, and scoffs,

sweep over the famous city like a surging tide; and their ancient splendors, their faith in JEHOVAH, their patriarchs, their prophets and seers, are by the world remembered as a half-forgotten dream! Scattered by the whirlwind, they have no safe refuge from oppression on the earth. Christians revile them—the heathens curse them; the iron heels of the despotisms of policy and custom grind them in the dust; and the divine adjuration uttered by the dying GOD-MAN on the mercy seat of the cross: "FORGIVE THEM, THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO," is scarcely understood in their regard. The world has taken an awful revenge—unrelenting, untiring, and cruel on them. Their crime was great, and much have they suffered. Manifold oppressions have taught them cunning, and men wonder at it. They are robbed of their lawful gains under legalized acts, and the world is amazed at the numberless stratagems resorted to by the banned race to save their gold; it would thrust them beyond the pale of humanity, forgetting they have hearts and natures fashioned like our own, with the same impulses, the same feelings; and when, perchance, amidst so many gloomy and depressing fatuities a noble trait or generous impulse is developed, it stands back, and shouts "a miracle!" But pardon us, reader; we do not often intrude our thoughts on you. We did but lift our voice a moment in behalf of the ancient people of God who wander towards the promised land, following a pillar of cloud and fire which will at last guide them thither. Mr. Moysa was a Jew. He adhered faithfully to the ancient institutions of the synagogue; the laws of the Sanhedrim were sacred in his estimation as when his nation were in the full tide of their glory; he believed that the Messiah was yet to come; but Mr. Moysa was a being whose character was conspicuous for many natural virtues and excellent qualities very apparent to the few who associated familiarly with him. He did not escape the usual odium; the penalties of his unbelief and the unbelief of his people often surged like bitter waters around his soul; he would fain have gathered the dispersed tribes together once more; he would have laid down his life to behold the banner of the Lion of Judah unfolding its blazonry of green and gold over the walls of the beautiful City of the Temple, and heard the shout which declared the restoration of ancient splendors; he felt all this in a supreme degree. But Mr. Moysa was a good citizen; he interfered with no creed or doctrine, and gave amply from his abundance to the poor. He was thought stern and over shrewd, but it was only by those who were afraid the superior tact of the Jew would overreach their determination to defraud him of just profits. He was usually silent, because it entered into but few minds to imagine that a

Jew had a feeling beyond the rise and fall of stocks and the value of moneys. But amidst the ashes that filled his heart, stifling its faith and clouding over the disc of its immortal vision with types and shadows, the spark of human sympathies smouldered; it required only a kindly breath, a word of trusting confidence, a liberal expression to kindle it into genial warmth, as we have seen. Mrs. Willoughby's secret was in safe and judicious keeping. His feelings had been touched by her agony, and his admiration challenged by the strength of mind and nerve that lifted her almost sublimely above it. He did not understand the mystery, but determined to make use of extraordinary efforts to find the young Italian, who seemed to be in some way painfully connected with it.

Mr. Bedford was astonished beyond expression when he heard the history of her exciting adventure, but, with his usual discretion, endeavored to repress every sanguine hope of its leading to the recovery of her missing child, by suggesting rational conjectures, and probable reasons, explanatory of its being in the possession of the youthful artist. But this, she could not submit to patiently from him. Alone with him, for Edith had received a hint to withdraw, who had known her from her birth, and supported her in all her peculiar heart-wringing trials, the mask of endurance was thrown aside; her calm, passionless bearing was awfully merged in the revealed agonies of her soul, as, throwing herself at his feet, she implored, "by the memory of her mother, not to crush her, by coldly extinguishing every ray of hope in her heart. She knew her child lived; there was a yearning, a warm, living fount unsealed in her bosom which only a kindred vitality could give birth to. Such instincts and presentiments blossomed not up from the abyss of the grave. Promise to aid me, Mr. Bedford, or, Heaven is my witness, I will become a wanderer over the earth until I find my boy."

"My poor child!" said Mr. Bedford, raising her up, and speaking in a voice of sincere commiseration. "I wish not to pain you; God knows you have suffered enough; but tell me, child, *what* can I do, how must I begin? If laying down my life this moment would restore your son, I would do it, how gladly, Heaven only knows."

"Oh, cruel old man! You talk as if you thought of impossibilities, of tasks that Hercules himself might have shrunk from; but you are not a mother, how should you know?" she exclaimed, as she rushed passionately to the door. "I will seek him alone; I'll wander, demanding him of all I meet, for, as I have a soul, I believe he lives."

"Pause, Miriam Vernon; there is one remote hope," he said commandingly.

"Bless you—oh, bless you for that sweet drop of comfort," she cried, hastening back to his side.

"My poor child, be calm. Did Moysa say that the youth who deposited that medallion with him was, or represented himself to be, an Italian artist?"

"Yes. Oh, yes!" she gasped.

"He could not remember the name?"

"No! but keep me no longer in suspense; it tortures me more than you dream of. Name this hope!"

"Poor, suffering heart," said Mr. Bedford, folding her hands in his, and regarding her white agitated features with profoundest sympathy. "Miriam, do you remember the pictured scenes of the Campagna de Roma, and the Hermitage chapel of St. Soleure?"

She had, until that moment, forgotten the friendless artist who painted them, and whose stern necessities she had relieved; but now, amidst the wildest hopes, she remembered all the circumstances. His youth, his country, his Saxon style of beauty, all flashed bright and clear on her recollection, and clasping her hands together, she ejaculated: "Come, let us begone to seek him; do not delay one moment; come at once, in pity. I am sure—nay, something whispers, that he is the same."

"Be calm, Miriam; we cannot go now; I know not where Massoletti is. He removed some weeks ago from his old lodgings. I must see Harry De Vere ere I can ascertain his whereabouts. He has been the boy's constant friend. Return home, my child; tranquillize your mind; we are at the beginning of a labyrinth, and patience and caution are absolutely necessary to the preservation of the clue. I will seek De Vere immediately, and ascertain where Massoletti is; then bring him to you."

"Oh, the torture of suspense! What ages will the moments seem until then!" she said, acquiescing unwillingly in these judicious arrangements, that seemed all too slow for her bounding wishes. "But I will leave you. Attend to this without delay, as you hope for Heaven, I conjure you; I pray you, Mr. Bedford, pause not until you find my—this youth." Edith had been sitting with Mrs. Grimshaw, so preoccupied with the thought of her stepmother, and her strange, passionate mood, that she heard not a single word of the eloquence of the garrulous old housekeeper, which, however, ran on the more blithely, from not being interrupted, and was relieved when she was called to accompany her home, by observing the same passionless calm on her face that generally reigned, like moonlight, over it.

After they left him, Mr. Bedford leaned his head on his hands, and fell into a profound reverie, which was only interrupted at intervals by a low long-drawn whistle, that seemed to escape involuntarily from his lips. At last he arose, and adjusting his hat on his head, grasped his cane, and exclaimed: "I thought she had more of the Spartan matron about her;" then proceeded to inquire about Massoletti.

When Harry De Vere hastened so abruptly from Edith's presence, an hour or two previous, he scarcely knew whither his footsteps were wending, until he found himself near a group of fashionable young men, who surrounded an object in the portico of an hotel, that appeared to be struggling with all its impotent strength to get away. Their loud peals of laughter at its vain efforts arrested his attention, and pausing an instant, he saw a thin white hand elevated, holding in its grasp an oval morocco case, and heard pleading accents of distress in a voice that he recognized at once as Massoletti's, as, overpowered by superior strength and numbers, his fingers were forced away, and he was compelled to resign it to his tormentors.

"Indeed, senors, it is not quite dry. It is for one great friend. It is only one little Psyche; do not touch it, senors, for the love of Mary. Oh, senor Henrie!" he exclaimed, espying his friend, who was pressing through the throng to his assistance, "the good God has sent you to help me."

"Gentlemen, desist, I beg of you. This young foreigner is under my protection," he exclaimed.

"We only wanted a little fun with him. We intended the fellow no harm," cried young Tresham, good-humoredly.

"And who is this?" asked Walter Shirley, who still held Massoletti's wrist. "Who dares to interfere with the sports of gentlemen?"

"Your equal, sir," he replied with dignity, while he quietly took Massoletti's Psyche and put it into his breast-pocket, and deliberately buttoned his coat over it. "And as such I demand the release of this youth, who, I repeat, is under my protection."

Thus addressed, and by the man he most feared and hated on earth, Walter Shirley's hot Southern blood was roused, and his only reply was a glare of defiance, and a tightening of his grasp on his victim, who now stood passive and silent, his cheeks blanched to a transparent whiteness.

"Will you release him, Mr. Shirley?" he again asked.

"No; not at the bidding of such a low-born cur!" he shouted.

"Shame! Shame!" burst from the crowd, and Harry De Vere's eyes flashed fire at the insult; but he commanded the violent im-

pulses that the provocation suggested, and calmly placing one arm around the terrified foreigner, released him from Walter Shirley's grasp with scarcely an effort. Enraged and baffled before so many who had been accustomed to regard him as their leader, he would have sprung like a tiger bereft of his prey on him, but was held back, and borne by his friends into the hotel, while Harry De Vere and his *protégée* walked away in triumph.

"How did it happen, Massoletti?" he inquired.

"I was bringing this to you, Senor Henri, you who are so good to the friendless. For you I painted it. It was not dry; but I am going away to sketch some American views, a few stadii off, and wanted you much to get it before I depart. I was bringing it to you, and opened it a *leetle* to the sun as I walked, and the senors saw it. I feared they would touch it. Then they tried to get it away. I held it up close tight in my fingers, and wished to escape much, but could not. You came, and here is your Psyche. I return it to you now. See how beautiful! Senor Henri," said the grateful Massoletti, his face beaming with pride, and almost forgetful of his adventure in the pleasure of offering the exquisitely painted Psyche to his benefactor.

"It is very fine, very beautiful, Massoletti. You will be a Titian one of these days. I will prize this very highly, my friend, and thank you for it. But you labor too closely at the easel—you must rest. The spring will soon open; already the birds sing in our woods; the leaves and flowers are bursting into bloom on the trees and hedges, and you must go where you will see it all. Then, when you feel strong, you will sketch some beautiful views. There are some, a few stadii out, that, at sunset or sunrise, are perfect Claudes. I wish you to go, and will give you the means."

"Yes, Senor Henri, at sixteen o'clock* I go. I need not your moneys now. I am rich. I have—let me see—ten, thirty, seventy dollar—all I got by my pictures," he said, raising De Vere's hand, with a sudden impulse, to his lips, while tears started to his eyes. "I go away sorrowful. I will feel all alone, again, Senor Henri, when I see you not."

"But it will not be long, my Massoletti," he replied, touched by the boy's sadness of manner. "If you stay here at work so incessantly, the world will lose its Titian the younger. You will die without immortalizing your pencil."

"Yes," he replied proudly, while a warm hue dyed his cheeks, and the scintillations of genius sparkled in his deep blue eyes.

* In Rome, they count the hours from one to twenty-four o'clock.

"I must not yet die. Farewell, Senor Henri. *Sancta Maria* protect you, as you befriend me! O, there is a whisper in my ear so sad! It says, I will not see you—never again!"

"Farewell, Massoletti. The fresh air of heaven, the music of birds, and the sound of falling waters, like the wild sweet voice of *Tivoli* dashing its spray over the cactus-covered rocks, will drive away all gloom. Let me know as soon as you return," said De Vere, cheering the young artist's heart with courageous and poetical words.

The next day, at an unusually early hour, he was surprised by a visit from Mr. Bedford. "Where, in the name of Peter Rugg and the wandering Jew, have you been hiding yourself, Harry De Vere? I have been at your heels for the last twenty-four hours; pacing here—driving down this street—racing up another; here, there, everywhere have I been, looking for you until, for the first time in my life, I am regularly foundered; and *you*, here you sit, studying the philosophy of mathematics with as much unconcern as if you were released from every mundane care," he exclaimed, sitting down quite exhausted.

"My dear sir, I am truly sorry that I have been the unconscious cause of so much trouble and fatigue," he replied, grasping his hand with a smile of welcome; "but I am now at your service, however urgent the business may be."

"Where's Massoletti, Harry? It's about him that I have had this infernal chase."

"Massoletti left the city yesterday evening, on a sketching tour," he replied, calmly. "I hope nothing disastrous threatens the poor boy."

"The devil he did! Gone! The plot thickens. I'm in a slough of despond," said Mr. Bedford, almost rubbing his gloves to pieces. "When will he be back?"

"In the course of a few weeks, I fancy."

"Say a few hundred years—do. There's a good soul. Say five hundred years," exclaimed Mr. Bedford, thoroughly fretted. "Good Lord! What could have sent the young rascal pottering off to the country just now? He will lay like lead on my head, heart, and liver until he return."

"My dear sir, pardon me; but I do not think I understand you exactly this morning. Massoletti was drooping; indeed, I fear decided hectic symptoms are developed, and it was by my advice that he has changed his quarters. I can't help believing, however, that if evil threatens Massoletti, you would be the last one on earth to hunt him with it."

"See here, Harry, if *evil* threatened the lad, old John Bedford

would pulverize that man to an impalpable powder who would dare propose to him to go on his trail to betray him. You are right. I'd defend the helpless boy, but never harm him. But, good-by. I must see Mrs. Willoughby immediately," he said with energy, as he refitted his hat. Not an hour had elapsed since his departure, when young Tresham was introduced into De Vere's presence by his servant. He wore a very ominous countenance, and took the seat that was proffered him with a silent bow.

"A fine morning, Mr. Tresham," observed Harry de Vere, astonished at his manner.

"Very. I wish the business I come on was as agreeable as the weather," he answered, drawing from his pocket a sealed note, and handing it to him. "Break the seal without ceremony, sir, if you please." It was a challenge from Walter Shirley. "My principal directs me to say, 'if an ample and humble apology is made for your interference of yesterday, Mr. De Vere, he will be satisfied.'"

"He will!" observed De Vere, calmly.

"Certainly! If not, you must stand shot at twelve paces!"

"I *must!*"

"Of course! And he's the first shot in town. I've seen him split a twig at twenty paces—I saw him do it this morning. He's a dangerous fellow!"

"*He is?*"

"This is certainly strange conduct, I must say, Mr. De Vere. What shall I say to my friend Shirley?" asked Tresham, irritated by his imperturbable gravity and coolness.

"Say this, Mr. Tresham!" he replied, rising, and folding his arms on his broad chest: "That Mr. De Vere is no duellist. That he fears not man, but frankly confesses to dread an offended GOD too much to become a murderer, or commit the suicidal act of standing voluntarily to be murdered. That he has sufficient moral courage to defy the established opinions of the world on this point."

"You will apologize, then—" eagerly interrupted Tresham.

"For what, sir?" he indignantly asked; "for performing a duty which every generous emotion of manhood prompted, for rescuing from violence and insult a boy—a foreigner, as delicate and helpless as a woman? Never, sir! It is I who should demand apologies!"

"You will then neither fight nor apologize? I must say, such conduct is without a precedent in the annals of gentlemanly courtesy!" said Tresham.

"Beware, sir. Go not beyond your instructions!" cried De

Vere, in a tone of such indignant command that his visitor looked involuntarily towards the door. "Our business is over, I believe!"

"Have I your final answer, Mr. De Vere?"

"You have, sir, decidedly and finally!"

"Good morning, sir!" said Mr. Tresham, bowing himself out with an incipient sneer on his countenance, which developed itself in a broader expression, when he was safely out of sight; and twirling his *moustache*, he muttered, "I'd cut my throat before I'd mount the white feather in that way—curse me if I wouldn't. *He's a coward!*"

Walter Shirley was surrounded by his clique, when Tresham returned. His report of the reception he met with, and De Vere's reply to the challenge, were received with uproarious shouts of laughter, and expressions of unmeasured contempt at what they, in their worldly wisdom, were pleased to name *poltroonery*.

"I'll post him before night—egad will I," exclaimed one.

"I'd horse-whip him, Shirley!" suggested another.

"We must cut him dead—that's certain. His brother, Miss Freddy, could not behave worse!" said a third.

"Gentlemen!" said Walter Shirley, rising, with a sardonic smile of triumph on his face, "I thank you, one and all. This poltroon has dared to cross my path oftener than twice, or thrice; you all witnessed his impertinence yesterday, and now witness that he refuses to give me the satisfaction of a gentleman, which I condescended to offer him. But, by Heaven! he shall not escape me thus! He has placed himself in my power by his dastardly conduct, and he shall meet the chastisement of a coward!"

"Yes! yes! he deserves it. You were only looking at a picture, and he insulted you, by wresting it from your hand without the least provocation!" exclaimed the zealous Tresham. The lie was acquiesced in by acclamation, and in that guise the adventure was talked of at the various clubs and several parties that night. Edith heard it, accompanied with the insinuation that Mr. De Vere's animosity towards Mr. Shirley arose from the fact of his being a successful rival in her affection. She was pained, because the whole world seemed determined to accuse and ban him; but her confidence in his worth was unshaken. Although she believed in her heart that he regarded her with careless indifference, the idea of his being base, or cowardly, was rejected by her with the scorn it deserved, and she felt, as certain as she breathed, that his refusal to meet her lover was grounded on high and holy principles. Mrs. Willoughby's preconceived prejudices were strengthened by the circumstance; but she made no comment or remark, except to

inquire of her nephew if the young foreigner was an Italian, and whether he was named Massoletti? But he "could not inform her really—he believed it was something like, but could not be upon honor—he would inquire."

Edith's manner annoyed him. His devoted attentions and softly whispered protestations seemed to fall coldly on her ear, and, silent and thoughtful, she exhibited a shade of reserve, as unusual as it was cutting to him. He assumed his softest and most insinuating air, and tried to lead her mind into its usual channel by the charm of his rare powers of conversation; but all in vain. The spirit of sadness brooded above her heart—phantoms of joys, forever fled, flitted away in long gloomy vistas through her imagination; and her voice was mute, and returned no echo to the spell. From her face, the smiles of soul-lit gladness had faded, and her gay musical laugh was hushed; but the sapient world imputed it to late hours, and that power of controlling all natural emotions that the tyrannic precepts of fashion so soon teach. "Edith begins to feel the weariness of constant visiting, and fashionable hours, I fear!" said Mrs. Willoughby to her nephew. She had observed the change, and heard others also remark it. "I must get her back to Woodreve as soon as possible. I fear she is not as robust as when she made her *début*."

"Between us, Charlie!" whispered Mrs. Lacy to her husband, the same evening, "I believe our Etha has more heart this moment for that noble Harry De Vere than for her *affiancée*. I don't believe one word of all this varnished over statement about the duel, and all that. Mind, if I'm not a true prophetess. We have only heard one side of the story, and you'll see that Harry De Vere has acted nobly and honorably."

"Caro, you are a little quixotic fool. You take up the cudgels for everybody who won't fight for themselves," he replied laughing; "I'm afraid it is true."

"It is well, sir, you are so guarded by Mrs. Willoughby's guests, or I'd pinch you—yes, severely, sir!" she said, pretending to pout; "but, in lieu of it, depend on a Caudle lecture to-night without fail."

And while the select coteries of fashion were enjoying themselves at Mrs. Willoughby's *soirée*, we will return to the old laboratory—

CHAPTER XV.

"But knowledge hath a far more wildering tongue,
And she will stoop, and lead you to the stars."
WILLIS.

"He had borne up,
With a stout heart, that long and weary day,
Haughtily patient of his many wrongs—"
PARRHASIUS.

MR. BEDFORD was alone in the old laboratory. He leaned over a table beside him, which was strewed with papers and rolls of musty parchment, that he occasionally referred to, with an eager expression of countenance wherein was blended much of anxious hope, then drew curious figures and mysterious conjunctions of the twelve signs of the zodiac. He was evidently casting a nativity. His face grew pale—nay, pallid, except a bright crimson spot that burned on either cheek, and his eyes glanced with a feverish light as he proceeded with his task. He was not a firm believer in the exploded science of Astrology—he understood its principles, but admitted its fallacies; but now his love for Edith, the child of his heart, tempted him. He knew that a mildew was stealing over her existence—he felt that her approaching marriage with Walter Shirley was not attended by those mutual sympathies and unclouded affections so essential to wedded happiness, and he trembled for her. He could not understand exactly how it had come to pass; and he knew full well that his days were drawing too near their close for him to see the result, but he believed that dire misery threatened her in this union; he beheld with a prophetic feeling that haunted him, "his beautiful star Etha," dimmed and blighted by an unworthy power whose influences were all evil, and he could not rest.

"I will consult the planets!" he said at last; "*I* may be deceived; but if there are auspices, I will tax my faith to confide in their signs." And night after night he watched the stars; when all else slumbered, there knelt he—far up in his observatory, his eyes patiently pressed against the lens of his telescope, peering into the shadowy future by the light of the watch-fires of heaven. Like some old seer in Babylonian tower, when the art of the Chaldee was held in high repute, he scanned the stars, hoping they would unfold from their blazing altars their oracles

in scrolls of light, that he might interpose himself to defend and rescue her, if woe threatened her destiny. Cautiously he made his observations; secretly and carefully he noted down the position of the signs presented by the planets, until they could reveal no more; counter influences interposed like a mist between his vision and her horoscope; the figures grew indistinct and shifting; then half baffled, half successful, he proceeded to arrange and combine his abstruse calculations in that regular order which would answer definitely some, at least, of his anxious hopes.

"May Heaven pardon this weakness of my poor old heart!" he whispered; "I mean no wrong. If by it I have fallen into sin, merciful Lord of Light, pity and forgive my erring will." And the outline of Edith's nativity was cast. In silence and dread, scarcely interrupted by the loud throbbing of his heart, that kept time to the nervous click of his old-fashioned watch on the table, he filled up the celestial divisions one after another. But now he muttered low, incoherent words; light and order were dawning on the chaos—his lips grew white, and a shivering like an ague shock passed over his thin frame. "Ha! ha! The aspect of Venus with Herschel in quartile to both Saturn and Jupiter is ominous of insincerity and falsehood! Saturn governs the ascendant—um—um—opposed to the lord of the second; ha! ha!—um—the native to be tossed and whirled by Fate. But lo! Io TRIUMPHE! Jupiter arises—slowly—so—there again—steadily he glows while the cloud passes—deliverance is at hand!!—But ho!" he shouted, starting back, "Mars and Mercury are here terribly vitiated by obnoxious and fell quartiles—the MOON is in the square to the sun—Mars and Mercury are likewise in malignant opposition to both the infortunes from the sixth and twelfth houses of the celestial figure—they—threaten—DEATH! Oh miserable old fool! Ye lie, false prognostics! I believe ye not! It is a diabolical illusion!" he cried in a voice of agony, as with trembling hands he swept the papers together, and threw them wildly on the smouldering fire. "So perish!" he cried, wringing his hands and leaping to and fro like a madman—"so perish lying predictions—ha! blaze up merrily—shrivel—ay, blacken and become incorporate, false record, with material dust and ashes!" When the last fragment was consumed, he fell back exhausted in his great arm-chair, and closing his eyes pressed his clasped hands over his clammy forehead.

Gradually the last faint rays of twilight stole through the discolored window panes, to melt in the thickening gloom—then night gathered around him; but motionless and still he reclined, like a gray marble effigy amidst the darkness. Suddenly a bright flame flickered up from the grate, and long grim shadows, like forms of

old, danced over the floor—they beckoned—and writhed in wild contortions, then trembled away into corners; long drawn and undulating, like serpents running to their holes. The ghastly skeletons and hideous fossil remains which decorated the cases seemed instinct with awful life, as the winking firelight glared mockingly on them; they nodded their heads, and as with incessant motion their gaunt frames shook as if a whirlwind passed through the bleached bones—they uttered voiceless words and laughter, known only by ghastly grin on the fleshless faces. There was a Walpurgis revel around the old man—but he saw it not, as he, with his snowy hair, sat throned like a superior spirit amidst it all. His heart was not there—it had burst, like a winged thing, through the silence and rime of long thoughtful years, and wandered back in its infinite mystery to earlier days. He trod his ancestral halls once more—he saw the old unshorn woods, waving their verdure in the spring sunshine—there were the hawthorn hedges with their snowy blossoms scenting the air with fragrance, and the song of the thrush on her nest amidst the leaves was heard. On his breast leaned the head of his life's young love, while the soft westerly winds stirred the golden tresses of her hair. She was almost a child then, just hovering on that bright, trusting point between girlhood and womanhood; and lavishing her sisterly affection on him who loved her with a strength that time nor death could weaken. Then he remembered her—the wife of another—then he saw her dead—and, uttering a loud groan of anguish, he was still again; but the gloom was passing away—angels of peace gathered around him with gentle ministrations—the dark spell wrought by presumptuous knowledge no longer dismayed him—he renewed his faith in God, and was comforted. Then soaring up, his spirit once more sought the stars—floating amid their wheeling orbits, he listened to the ineffable melodies of creation—the harmony gathered like a rainbow about him, tangible and beautiful, until the mists brightened, and tears welled up from the old man's gentle heart. He noticed, for the first time, the uncertain light around him, and hastened to turn over the fire, smouldering and sparkling fitfully as his own heart had been doing, among its ashes; and a genial steady flame burst forth illuminating every cranny of the apartment! Away fled the phantom shadows, and the glare of light on the glass cases entirely concealed the hideous images they contained behind their burnished screen. Two wax candles soon blazed in the old candelabras, and he opened a rare treatise, in manuscript, written in the ages of faith, amidst the solitude of the cloister. The parchment pages were illuminated with constellations and planets, surrounded by designs so richly

colored and gilded, that they looked as if but a few days had elapsed since the hand of art had touched them into life. Mr. Bedford was soon absorbed in the perusal of the quaint philosophy exhibited in the subject of the treatise, when a slight tapping at his door announced a visitor, and Harry de Vere entered.

"Ever welcome, Harry. There is your chair. Late this evening, I received a letter from Washington which concerns you materially. I intended to see you early to-morrow; but I'm glad you've come—my old place has been singularly lonely to-night, and the sound of a human voice is welcome!" he said in his usual cheerful tones.

The young man's face was extremely pale—his clustering hair was thrown entirely back from his broad forehead, revealing the intellectual majesty of its proportions. A stern, but lofty expression had settled on every lineament of his countenance, imparting to it a look of chiselled marble.

"I fear my presence will not suggest many cheerful thoughts, sir!" he replied, in so changed and husky a voice that Mr. Bedford started, and, after a penetrating glance, observed that all was not right.

"See here, Harry—look full into my eyes—turn your face fully to the light—so. Now tell me, what means that dilated pupil—that compression of the lips—what mean those rigid muscles—that expanded nostril, and quick, short breathing? I see it all now—I did not at first. What strange demons are at work with you, boy, for these are all the signs of mental agony?"

"I am unconscious of presenting so changed an appearance, my dear Mr. Bedford," he said, calmly; "but I have been excessively annoyed to-day, which may account satisfactorily for it. But do me the favor to let me hear those portions of the Washington letter which refer to myself."

Mr. Bedford did not feel quite satisfied with an explanation couched in such general terms, but forbore further remark on the subject then. An indistinct idea that Edith was in some way connected with his evident agitation presented itself, and from motives of nice delicacy, he deemed it most prudent not to intrude on his confidence by pressing questions which the most sensitive feelings of honor might cause him to wish to remain secret.

He unfolded a letter bearing a broad official seal, and observed, "This, Harry, is from General Beverly. It is about your invention, which has been examined by scientific men in the employment of the government, who pronounce it to be of the highest utility. It is to be applied, immediately after the necessary arrangements are made with you about the disposal of the patent, to two war-

steamers, now being finished on the stocks—but hold on—don't interrupt me yet—I have still greater news. Our envoy at the coast of Belgium is in such an extremely low state of health that he has offered his resignation to the government, but will remain until some one is selected by the powers that be, to supply his place. He's a man of extraordinary abilities, and has transacted with the most signal success several difficult diplomatic affairs between the two governments. The administration has delegated to General Beverly the privilege of nominating a person for the vacancy occasioned by Mr. C——'s resignation. He asks me if 'I think it possible that Mr. Henry De Vere will accept of a place for which his talents and worth eminently qualify him. "Quintus" has been quoted in the Senate, and his appointment to a place of trust will meet with general approval.' He concludes by saying 'his authority in submitting the offer to Mr. De Vere proceeds from the highest quarters.' But there's the letter, Harry—read it yourself." A glow of honest pride overspread the pale countenance of De Vere as he read the flattering commendations pronounced by the pure veteran statesman on his character and genius; and the honorable offer which, unsolicited and unexpected by him, was offered for his acceptance by his country. It was a triumphant moment! He beheld a vista of honor and fame suddenly opened before him—his wildest dreams were on the eve of realization, and with a thrill of rapture his spirit arose within him, like a giant, filling him with strength and power—but suddenly he quailed! and, striking his forehead with his clenched hand, exclaimed in bitter accents, "It is too late—too late!"

"God bless my life! the whole world seems turning the wrong way for a time past! Are you mad, Harry De Vere, to reject such advantages as are now, in the most honorable terms, offered to you?" exclaimed Mr. Bedford, rising, and standing before him.

"Venerated friend," he said, grasping his hand, "pardon my apparent ingratitude—my seeming madness—for madness it must seem—and listen to me a moment—I will explain all." He then narrated briefly his encounter with Walter Shirley, its cause and results. "I offered no insult—I was calm and courteous!" he added, "but determined to rescue that poor, fragile boy from such wanton cruelty. I did so; and in return for the most insulting language—words that made the blood burn, as it coursed through my veins, I returned only—silent contempt; for I believed then that the whole party were heated by wine. A challenge from Mr. Shirley was handed to me this morning—I refused it!"

"You refused a challenge?" ejaculated Mr. Bedford in a tone of dismay; for the prejudices of a lifetime were in favor of duel-

ling; he thought that personal insult could only be adjusted, and its stigma wiped away, at the tribunal of this false code of honor.

"I did—I refused to meet him in the most decided terms, and my name is branded with cowardice, because I had the courage to do so. This day I have passed through an awful ordeal! All the worst passions of my soul have been roused to tempt and infuriate me—revenge and outraged feeling warred against principle and shook the citadel of my strength. The world's threatened scorn dismayed me—the taunts of those to whom my life should be dear rung in my ears—the false tyrannic demands of a spurious honor assailed me—the sophistical arguments of a world-old custom beguiled at times my reason—until, wearied out with the conflict, I almost yielded; but, thanks to Almighty God, whose attributes I venerate, the temptation passed away, and, strong in trust, shielded by right, I defy the consequences of my sacrifice to principle."

"I know, Harry de Vere, that it was for no lack of courage on your part that you refused that rascal's challenge; but the world, sir! the world, believe me, will not judge you so leniently," said Mr. Bedford, shrugging his shoulders; "you needn't have killed him; a shot or two in his wing would have done him good, and kept him out of mischief. It is not too late now, eh?"

"I will never, under any circumstances, become a duellist, Mr. Bedford. Firm on the broad platform of rational and moral philosophy, I am ready to present an undaunted front to the world, and all that its folly can array against me on this point. I will not dare assume that prerogative which belongs alone to OMNIPOTENCE, by voluntarily taking or yielding life, which, as His gift, should be alone subject to His will. Would adding crime to injury dispel the evil complained of—would it not rather augment the sting? God! not for the world's all of honor, fame, or riches, would I have the red stain of blood on my forehead! You are right, sir, on one point. I am conscious of no fear of man! If my country demanded my services to storm a battery, or scale a breach, or plant our glorious banner on the walls of a hostile citadel, single handed I would dare it; my life—my blood should be freely offered; but *never* to gratify murderous intentions or malicious revenge."

"Your ideas are ultra, Harry—they do not suit the world as it is. It is no Utopia, you know. But you are determined to brave it out, it seems; and the fact is, your motives command my respect, though I cannot for the life of me cordially assent to their control in this instance. And the world, Harry—the world—" said Mr. Bedford, shaking his head.

"Calm, sir, in the consciousness of acting as the principles of religion and reason dictate, I feel superior to the clamor of its reproaches. Like a mountain fir, the tempest may shake, but not force me from my firm position. And," he murmured aside, "if no other motive actuated me, *her* love for him would be his safeguard."

"It's a barbarous custom, when one analyzes it calmly, I must confess; but your refusal to comply with its laws will be regarded as an act of vandalism against society!" said Mr. Bedford, musingly.

"So let it be. I alone will bear the odium!" he said firmly.

"See here, Harry! I will not say another word to tempt you to transgress your preconceived notions; 'twould be entirely useless, I find; but, had you not better embrace without delay the offer made you through General Beverly, and go abroad? Leave your vexations behind you, and the whole affair will be forgotten in a month or two!" suggested Mr. Bedford.

"I fear, sir, that this unfortunate affair has placed an acceptance of the honor out of the question. General Beverly has been a military man, and, of course, is an advocate for this strange code of honor, and will regard a man who refuses a challenge as unworthy of the offices of his friendship!" replied De Vere in a tone of proud humility.

"He has done it *twice* himself, in his lifetime—the most unaccountable thing on earth, for he was considered the bravest man in the army, *sans peur, sans reproche*. It's not likely he'd disapprove of your course!" said Mr. Bedford; "but, independent of all these considerations, would you accept the mission?"

"Without hesitation," he replied, "if, after a full statement of the affair is laid before General Beverly, his opinions and wishes are the same."

"Very well. If you do not object, I will write to-night, and make him thoroughly acquainted with the details of the affair; but mark me, it will only raise you to a more elevated point in *his* estimation," answered Mr. Bedford.

"Which I fear, sir, it has not in yours!" he observed.

"You're a strange fellow, De Vere; and I sha'n't be able to tell, for a day or two, how the thing influences me. I believe I feel a little awed at your sublime folly! You may be a Ulysses among the Cyclops—I hope you are. I fear, even should you triumph, your victory will be a Cadmean one; but of one thing be assured, boy—here is your old place in my heart—" cried Mr. Bedford, opening his arms. Harry de Vere's heart swelled almost to bursting—his lips trembled—but he could not speak, and in another

moment his head was leaning on Mr. Bedford's shoulder—he was clasped to his breast with a strength of affection that nothing could sunder. Nothing more was said on the subject. They understood each other, and bore with forgiving love each other's antagonistic sentiments.

"Farewell, Harry!" said Mr. Bedford, retaining his hand a moment. "I have promised to escort Mrs. Willoughby and Edith to Woodreve to-morrow—Etha is drooping, and we think her old haunts and the fresh air will revive her. I will not see you again for a day or two. I will mail my letter to the General to-night, and if an answer comes from the department ere I return, open it."

"Thank you, best of friends! I fear I do not deserve your unmeasured kindness," replied De Vere, pressing his hand warmly.

"Tut—tut! Such humility is all moonshine! Cheer up, Harry—cheer up—the malignant planet will soon sink below the horizon, and your star be in the ascendant again. I am speaking figuratively mind—I am not a believer in astrology—I repudiate it as demoniacal!"

And thus they parted. Mr. Bedford in, to his labor of love; and De Vere home, to spend the night in sleepless vigils—haunted by bitter thoughts, with Edith, pale and phantom-like, shrined above them all.

Late the following afternoon, a business engagement of some importance demanded his presence at the very hotel which had been the scene of his unpleasant encounter with Walter Shirley. As he approached the crowded portico, every eye was turned with a broad stare on him, which he steadily returned; then paused a moment in their midst, and was passing with a calm, dignified mien into the hall, when Walter Shirley sprang forward, and planted himself directly across his way with an insulting laugh. He folded his arms, and fixing his eyes, now flashing indignantly on him, inquired in as calm a voice as he could assume,

"By what right, sir, do you impede my way? Let me pass!"

"By the right that all honorable gentlemen have to amuse themselves at a coward's expense!" he exclaimed, and at the same moment drew from underneath his coat a heavily loaded carter's whip, which he lifted over Harry De Vere's head—but he knew not the spirit with which he was thus recklessly dealing; he had never tested the strength of that sinewy arm; he dreamed not he was rousing a lion from its lair, until, with one spring, Harry De Vere wrested the lash from him, and seized both his hands in his Herculean grasp, pressing them with such unconscious force beneath the iron thews of his, that the blood started from beneath

the nails—then forced him back, step by step, against a pillar of the portico, and in view of all, lifted the whip as if for a fell destructive blow. For a moment it was held suspended, while he exclaimed, "You are in my power, sir! With one blow I could crush you like a worm beneath my heel—by one act of volition, I could confer a benefit on society by driving you from it in disgrace—I could chastise you as you deserve, base dastard—you are a mere reed in my hands———but go—you are free. Beware of crossing my path with insult again. I forgive you—go!" He hurled the ignominious weapon away, and a shout of admiration burst from every lip at his magnanimity. "Gentlemen," he said, turning towards them, as Walter Shirley, muttering deep curses, sheltered himself in the throng, "I am no duellist. I will not attempt by arguments to vindicate my principles on that point with you, but, if any person present can lend me the use of a pistol five minutes, I will convince all who doubt the fact that I possess sufficient skill in the use of the weapon to defend myself, if so disposed, at any moment by the use of it."

One was instantly placed in his hands. A white pigeon was flying high over the roofs of the houses—it was soaring like a speck in the sunshine, directly over their heads. "I will cripple its wing!" he said, as he aimed at the quarry; he fired, and the bird fell fluttering and bleeding among the group. He returned the pistol to its owner with brief thanks, bowed haughtily to those who thronged around him to offer their hands as a gage of *amende honorable* to him, and proceeded on to the room of the gentlemen with whom he had an engagement, as calmly and tranquilly in his dignified pride as if nothing had occurred to interrupt his passage.

"I heard it all, Harry—all, sir!" said Mr. Bedford, the day after, when he called.—"I congratulate you, by St. George! You have convinced the world now that you possess the highest quality of bravery—courage that has enabled you to maintain your principles by moral force, and defend yourself from insult, not only by a rare exhibition of physical strength, but by an act of self-government which commands admiration. People are never too old to learn, and you have taught me a lesson, boy, whose moral is, that a man may successfully vindicate his honor without becoming a murderer. But here is Beverly's reply—I received it at twelve o'clock—read it—it will add to your triumph."

"My dear Bedford:—

"Your letter only confirmed the high opinion I entertained of Mr. De Vere. A man whose mind and passions are under the

control of a wise self-government, is eminently qualified for a post of trust and honor. None other can meet the exigencies and sudden contingencies of life with courage, or conduct the delicate machinery of diplomatic relations with energy and tact.

"Ask Mr. De Vere to do me the favor to come immediately to Washington, and receive his instructions and credentials, for he must be off by the 20th.

"I predict that he will be an honor to his country abroad, as he already is at home. Ever your friend,

"FRANCIS BEVERLY."

"My dear Mr. Bedford!" observed the young man, after a thoughtful pause, "such eulogiums, from such a source, make me feel extremely diffident of my own abilities. The responsibility seems increased tenfold by General Beverly's indulgent appreciation of my poor talents—I may fall far short of his expectations when the test is applied; but, with God's help, every nerve, every power of my mind shall be taxed to deserve them!"

"A straightforward course, Harry, and an eye ever fixed on high points of excellence—no retrograding—no walking with your eyes downward towards the earth—leave that to your feet; but an upward gaze—upward hopes—must be your safeguard!" said Mr. Bedford.

"You are right, sir! The architect of his own high destiny, man alone is responsible for the duration and utility of the fabric he erects. But my heart is too full for words. Pardon me for leaving you with so little ceremony. I must impart this affair immediately to my excellent father! I am indebted to him for all—yes, all—"

"That is right—you are always right, Harry. Tell him I rather envy him the possession of you—but be off, and here, take the letter with you for him to read. If I had time, I'd go with you; but Mrs. Willoughby and Edith will be at Woodreve a week longer, and I have fifty commissions to attend to for them. Good-by," said Mr. Bedford.

And proudly exulted old De Vere's honest heart when he heard it all. He felt that the son of his affection was *worthy* of the honorable destiny that was opening on him. He knew that he had won his position by perseverance and skilful toil, as well as by the cultivation of those talents and virtues which nature, as a genuine patent of nobility, had conferred on him. He gloried in the fact that in him the dignity of labor and native genius was asserted—that in his success the spirit of the liberal institutions of the republic was triumphantly illustrated. And when he con-

firmed the reports that his father had heard relative to his two encounters with Shirley, the old man laid his hands on his head and declared, "Heaven will bless you, Harry. This moment my heart exults in you more than if an emperor's diadem was your only glory. You have been dutiful and obedient, the sole comfort of my life, and I feel that you are to be the staff of my age. Your old father's blessing will follow you, my boy."

"And your approval, my beloved father, I prize beyond that of any living being. The remembrance of it will sustain me under every difficulty," he replied, deeply touched by the unexpected scene.

"If *you* had only played your cards right, as I wished you to do, Frederick, when General Beverly was here, he might have selected you. To think, after all the pains and expense I have had with you, that Harry should be chosen over your head as an *envoy!*" said Mrs. De Vere, indignantly. But he did not deign her an answer, unless whistling a new Polka, combing his moustache, and adjusting the glittering *bagatelles* on his guard-chain could be regarded as one. Ringing for his hat and jewelled cane, he sauntered out, to dawdle the fashionable walking hours away in his usual haunts, with that air of exquisite *nonchalance* that always awed his mother.

"I declare, mamma, I always thought our ugly duck* would become a swan one of these days. I must get Harry to take me to Belgium with him. Perhaps I could captivate a count or baron, or maybe a prince—who knows? Would it not be superb to be called 'serene highness,' or even 'baroness?' I think I could stir up a prodigious sensation at Brussels, partly on my own account, and partly on Harry's credit," said Bessie, laughing.

"I wish you were there now," drawled Alice, from her heap of cushions. "You'll certainly shatter every nerve in my body if you stay."

"And lure off your silent colonel into the bargain. You ought to see how he laughs, Alice, when he thinks you don't see him, at my droll speeches," retorted Bessie, good humoredly.

"Colonel Forsyth is superior to such flimsy attractions. He adores silence and sentiment, and cannot bear to hear a lady laugh," replied Alice, angrily.

"Really! I would not be surprised to see him dying of the odor of a rose, some of these sentimental moonlight nights, the sensitive darling!" laughed Bessie. "But, mamma, I heard to-

* See Hans Andersen's story of the "Ugly Duck."

day that Edith Willoughby is to be married on the first of May, and that Mr. Shirley and herself start immediately for Europe."

"Yes. I heard nothing about their going to Europe. I knew the *trousseau* was in preparation, and a very elegant one it will be. I saw part of it at Madame le Roi's, and part at that Hewlett woman's. It is extremely *recherché*; but the wedding is to be strictly private, I heard. Another of Mrs. Willoughby's ultra notions," she replied, with a stately air.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Christians and proud! Oh, poor and wretched ones!
That, feeble in the mind's eye, lean your trust
Upon unstaid perverseness. Know ye not
That we are worms, yet made at last to form
The winged insect imped with angel plumes,
That to Heaven's justice unobstructed soars?
Why buoy ye up aloft your unfledged souls?"

DANTE, *Purg.*

THE *beau-monde* were weary of *fêtes*, routes, and parties. The opera season was over. Ellsler was in New Orleans, and Forrest in Paris. Everything was lamentably dull. The *élite* had feasted to repletion on lobster salad and ices; white jellies, pickled oysters, and olios were considered below par. Long, legible bills, recording truthfully the varied extravagances of the season, were daily discovered, folded neatly, beside the toast and muffins, on the breakfast-table, adding much to the general discomfort of the times, and what was still more stupid, there was a moral calm. Not a breath of scandal rippled the fragrant tea that was dished up to the various *coteries*. The old dowagers who frequented the whist-table probably fared better than the rest; for, in the absence of all other excitement, they doubled their stakes, and, over their losings and winnings, were ready to tear each other's wigs off. But the universal *ennui* might have been polka'd off, and the genius of fashion recuperated bravely from the languor of a closing season, had not LENT, like Banquo's ghost, glided solemnly in. Its regulations, once considered senseless and papistical, had recently been dignified and brought into high vogue by certain Oxford divines, or visionaries, who, retrograding from all progress, had wandered back to the dark ages, and from their obscurity

produced a few canonical laws, which, through some unaccountable oversight, had fallen into disuse and been forgotten. Some fasted because they considered it more healthy to abstain from flesh, as the relaxing weather of spring approached; others, because they conscientiously thought the unholy and roving propensities of their souls sorely needed a spiritual whipper-in. As to the Roman Catholics, poor souls, it was a season of great abnegation and penance to them; but they were regularly broken in, and endured their privations with patient meekness, their burthen being somewhat lightened by their strange belief in the efficacy of good works. Between opposing creeds there was, however, one bond of union. Hecatombs of FISH were sacrificed. According to the reports of the prices current in "Lyman's Register," "salmon was brisk, eggs firm, fish buoyant, meat depressed, and cheese uncommonly active." Those time-honored and privileged dames of the market, the fish-hucksters, radiant with satisfaction at their profits, no longer made the air musical with their oaths, and sulphureous with their maledictions; the times were easy, and they had leisure to think of gentility. But, like the frogs in the fable, what was fun to them was death to the drooping spirits of the *ton*. But their day of deliverance was near at hand. A most remarkable excitement presented itself for their benefit, which, occurring in Lent, could be consistently and meritoriously enjoyed. The stagnant waters were stirred by the angel of benevolence, and, in a perfect *furore*, towards the pool they rushed. The great and philanthropic plans which had recalled them to active life related neither to the Greeks, Poles, Hungarians, nor the galley slaves of Algiers or Tripoli. It originated, as most good things *do*, with the noble and sensible hearts of another class, who, being a little lower in the sliding scale of society, require no magnifying glasses to see and feel for the misery below *them*. The plan was in behalf of those martyrs to the needle, the oppressed seamstresses and tailoresses of the city. Their wrongs, which had long appealed to Heaven for redress, now heard a pitying echo on earth, and indefatigably labored the friends of their cause to ameliorate the evils of their condition. They gave an echo to the voice of MERCY, and narrated their grievances in accents so plaintive and truthful that the commiseration and sympathies of all the community were enlisted in their favor. Without ostentation or parade, substantial effects were wrought and applied by those whose noble aim it was to relieve the suffering. They sought not themselves, but the good of others, and felt more than honored by the success that crowned their efforts; but the charity of the world sought its own selfish gratification and *éclat* in its vainglo-

rious labors; and while some small amount of relief resulted from them, a deal more of sentiment was talked. The "Song of the Shirt" was heard in lugubrious cadences in every drawing-room, and subscription-lists were opened by several leaders of the *ton*, in aid of a general fund, to be applied to the relief of the worn-out and helpless members of the unfortunate class for whom their feelings were so zealously enlisted. They vied with each other in the art of intriguing to obtain the largest number of subscribers; jealousy and rivalry rolled bitter waves of contention over the beautiful spirit which first suggested to them holy ideas of ministering to the wants of the stricken; all that was heavenly in its origin was forgotten, until feuds and animosities were enkindled by their worldliness, which promised to be as enduring as those of the Guelphs and Ghibbelines of old. Charity is heaven-born, and its unblemished purity is soon tarnished and soiled by the spirit of the world; its garb sits uneasily on the impulsive and heartless demon, who, urging its votaries along the pathway of pride and ostentation, tempts them into sins which neutralize effectually all the good, all the sweetness, that, like celestial dews returning earthward, would steep their souls in peace. But we will spare the reader; we will; although a homily, a long homily, might be drawn from the premises.

A gaily-dressed and fashionable party were assembled at Mrs. De Vere's one morning, to discuss the engrossing topic. It was an especial meeting of some of the *élite*, who had formed themselves into a *clique* for the laudable purpose of excelling, in the amount of their subscriptions, another *clique*, who, in very dashing style, pretended to take the lead in the affair. What with the animated flutter of plumes, the crush of velvets, and the hum of conversation to which nobody was listening, the excitement was truly charming. Bessie De Vere and her southern lover, whose spirit in its mirthfulness was kindred with her own, had taken shelter in the embrasure of a window, where, half concealed by the flowing damask draperies which depended from the massive gilt cornice over it, they could look out on the proceedings of the meeting, and enjoy themselves at everybody's expense, with impunity. They anticipated a season of exalted glee. Alice, lounging on her everlasting cushions, was the picture of an *ennuyée*, pale and desponding, as she at intervals made an effort to turn her eyes languidly on a gentleman who sat beside her, holding her smelling-bottle and Chinese fan.

"Hist, Aubry!" whispered Bessie; "listen to their twaddle about Harry."

"La, Mrs. De Vere!" said one, "I was so surprised, you can't

think at the announcement of your son's appointment to a foreign post."

"And," put in another, "the papers compliment him so highly. I declare it's quite an honor!"

"I *must* congratulate you, Mrs. De Vere, about your son! I had no idea he was so talented. How he has got on, to be sure!" exclaimed a third.

"I declare he's quite taken everybody by surprise. I always thought him an excessively shy, dull young man!" observed another.

"Now it's mamma's turn to make a speech; the very folds of her satin stand out with dignity as she rises; the eloquent blood mounts to cheek and brow; Heaven send it may touch her tongue with fire!" said Bessie, in a low-toned voice, while she suppressed her disposition to giggle.

"My son Henry," said Mrs. De Vere, radiant with gratified pride, "was always a very studious boy, and when he grew up was devoted to science and books." No thought then of the little care she had bestowed on him in his boyhood, or the little affection she had shed about his ways; his honors reflected on her; as his mother, her consequence was heightened by his well-deserved and nobly earned position. There was not a single compunctious twinge to hallow or humble her thoughts of the past; every emotion was absorbed by inordinate vanity and self-love.

"And your son has gone to Europe on a very important government mission, Mrs. De Vere!" exclaimed a new-comer; "I declare you ought to feel very proud of him. My husband says he's the finest young man in the country. But, la me! did you hear of Mrs. Livingston's extravagant purchase?"

"I heard she had purchased a magnificent India shawl for Dora," replied Mrs. De Vere; "nothing more."

"For which," said the lady, lowering her voice as she saw Mrs. Livingston conversing with a group of ladies in the next apartment, "she paid *one thousand dollars*. People who have wealth ought to let their money circulate in the community, but not at the expense of justice and humanity. You must know, Mrs. De Vere, the very day that shawl was purchased, Mr. Livingston presented his lady with a check for fifty dollars, to pay a poor woman, a widow, who had been sewing for her the live-long winter. The woman was in a destitute situation, sick, and almost helpless herself; and had a child dying with the typhus fever. She was told the only thing that would save him was brandy, administered freely every few minutes. She wrote to Mrs. Livingston, explaining her circumstances, and besought her to send her a part of the sum

due her; but her reply was that 'she must wait until it was convenient for her to do so; she was sorry, but could do nothing then, and hoped she would be annoyed by no more duns, she was not accustomed to being dunned.' Then drove off with the fifty dollars in her pocket-book, and bought the shawl."

"I thought it cost one thousand?"

"So it did, my dear lady. She had nine hundred, and was at her wits' end to get the other. The fifty dollars came very opportunely, you see. She *paid* nine hundred and fifty down—the balance on the books, you know. The upshot of it all was, the child died, and was buried by the parish. You may depend on what I tell you. My maid is first cousin to the poor widow, and knew the whole business."

"How many disagreeable things are constantly happening to poor people! But I suppose they are used to it," said Mrs. De Vere, casting up her eyes. "I wonder if Miss Thorne has come?"

"Yes. Don't you hear her voice? It is high time the meeting was called to order. I will go after her."

"I am so sorry, Aubry, you did not hear Ole Bull the other night," said Bessie. "That '*Preghiera del Mosè*,' with variations on the fourth string, was positively ecstatic. Then the first concerto in E flat, with the *adagio flebile*, rings yet in my ears; it haunts my dreams, and I am dying to hear it again."

"I tell you what, Bessie, I wouldn't give one view halloo, one tally-ho, with the sound of horns, and the deep-mouthed baying of the hounds, for all the fiddling and squeaking on earth," said the young Southerner, gaily.

"You Vandal," laughed Bessie, giving him a smart rap with her fan. "But look, Aubry, at those two doves over there. Colonel Forsyth, bending so sentimentally over Alice, looks like a cabbage making love to a lily." They both laughed, and there being a sudden lull in the confusion of tongues, owing to Miss Thorne having shrilly called the "meeting to order, for the purpose of considering the great and benevolent object which had assembled them together," they overheard the gallant colonel say,

"Don't this 'orrible noise haffect your nerves to-day?"

"Oh, truly does it; they vibrate shockingly!" she replied, languidly, while she threw up her eyes as if in silent appeal to Heaven for aid.

Miss Cicely, meanwhile, had thrown off her bonnet and shawl, and seated herself on Bessie's piano stool which she first screwed up to its highest altitude, and commenced the business of the morning by a brief expression of her "thanks to the company for

the unexpected honor they had conferred on her by calling her to preside over their deliberations on this interesting occasion."*

"She's what a piny-woods Virginian would call *a char-woman*," said Aubry. "I heard the best joke the other day, Bessie; I must tell you. You know my cousin, Jack Wyche on the wharf; he's an old bachelor; and if he has an especial horror on earth, it is that little Thorne of a woman perched up on your music-seat. She never lets an opportunity escape of tormenting his pocket until he is obliged to get rid of her to the tune of five or ten dollars for some of her pet charities. And we have so fully persuaded him that the Thorne is in love with him, and is determined to be Mrs. Wyche, that I expect some of these days he'll drown himself in the dock to get rid of her."

"Go on quick, Aubry, we'll miss her speech!" said Bessie, giggling.

"Well, one hot day last September, one of his clerks sprang into the counting-room, and gave the alarm that she was coming. 'I'm out!' exclaimed Wyche with an oath, springing into his iron safe. 'Is Mr. Wyche in?' inquired Thorne. 'No, madam, just gone to one of the banks; won't be back for an hour,' replied the clerk, almost bursting with laughter.

"'Oh, very well, I'm extremely tired, I'll sit down and wait.' Jack is rather plethoric, and he says, when he heard that, he thought he should melt into a river, or go off in an apoplectic fit; but he did neither; and, being on the eve of suffocation, had to come out; muttering curses, as Shakspeare says, 'not loud, but deep.' She received him like a seraph, and made known her petition in moving terms. 'I have nothing,' roared cousin Jack. 'I'm on the very eve of bankruptcy.'

"'But consider the distressed poor, dearest Mr. Wyche; we must not let them suffer in the midst of plenty!' 'Devil take the poor, madam! I have not a cent to give to-day. I had two notes protested this morning!' Of course, he lied. 'But a barrel of molasses would do, Mr. Wyche—or—or—anything else!' she said, turning her sharp eyes around. 'Lord, lord!' said Jack. 'Madam, there's a barrel of whiskey!' He did not think for a moment she would accept his offer; but she jumped at it, and very modestly asked the use of his porter and dray to convey it away."

"What did she do with it?" asked Bessie, laughing until tears ran over her cheeks.

* Of course, the reader will not suspect us of ridiculing genuine benevolence. It is the *ostentatious* spirit of the world, its spurious feeling and false sentimentality, that make us weep while we laugh.

"Went to another house above, and sold it for a few dollars beyond the market price on the score of charity. But listen—her voice would make a senate tremble, and her eloquence make them run!" said Aubry.

"I hope, ladies *and* gentlemen," screamed Miss Thorne, "that the utmost harmony will rule our deliberations. Mrs. De Vere's subscription to the fund of the Society for the Relief of Indigent and Helpless Seamstresses heads our list. It is the munificent donation of *one hundred dollars.* Each of the Misses De Vere, twenty-five dollars. Mr. Frederick De Vere, fifty dollars. And here are two notes of one hundred dollars each from two gentlemen, who do not wish to let their 'right hands know what their left do.' We can only give a shrewd guess that this extremely liberal gift to the society is presented by the husband and absent son of our esteemed and honored hostess." *Mrs. De Vere had told their secret.* "Who, I must say," continued Miss Thorne, "has evinced with all her family the most exalted liberality. Miss Tresham, forty dollars." "That is handsome," murmured Mrs. De Vere; "she's a young woman of spirit. I must invite her, and have her name on my visiting list." "She refused Mrs. Carlton point blank," whispered Miss Thorne, aside to Mrs. De Vere. "That set did everything they could to win her over; but she was firm to our interests."

"Mrs. Livingston, forty dollars—" "Oh the poor widow!" sighed Bessie. "Mrs. Mason, fifty. Mrs. Butler, twenty-five." And so she went on proclaiming the amount of each subscription as it was handed in until the list was closed, for the simple reason that there was no more to expect on this occasion. "My dear friends," she began, "it is enough to kindle up the heart of a stone with a glow of humanity to witness the liberal result of this meeting; a result glorious to the cause of charity and benevolence. We are all aware of the distress which pervades the indigent classes of society; and as Christians it is our duty to stretch forth our hands to them in their painful necessities. We have done so to-day, and they will rise up and call us and our children blessed."

"*Our* children! What does she mean, Bess?" asked Aubry, looking queer.

"Only an oratorical license, you wretch; do hush!" whispered Bessie.

"I have seen a great deal, ladies *and* gentlemen," continued Miss Thorne, "and *know* a great deal of the actual sufferings and privations of the poor from personal observation. I have been among them to minister to their wants, and constant opportunities have occurred for me to inform myself on the subject of their

habits and necessities. It is true, there are some drawbacks to one's kindly feelings in the fact that these people *will* marry —such marriages we all know are like, to quote the witty Madam B——, 'hunger and thirst coming together,' and ought to be prohibited by stringent laws. Such laws, of course, would lessen the pauper population of our country." A clear, prolonged whistle here interrupted the eloquent speaker; but, as the guilty party was completely hidden by the curtain of the window where he had taken shelter, no one knew who it was or whence it came, and she went on: "As to the *children* of these unfortunate marriages, I look on it as an especial blessing when they die. These people rush headlong into their difficulties, and *we* are taxed with their support. It is an evil that legislation ought to interfere with, gentlemen; but as it exists, ladies, hopelessly exists, we must not be behindhand with our duties. Some time ago I was at a missionary meeting, and was called on for a donation to assist in sending out clergymen to an African mission where a few months previous three holy men had their throats cut by the savage barbarians. Wives and children, of course, met the same awful fate. My reply was, 'that if people choose to go among savages to be murdered so shockingly, I could not with a clear conscience aid them with funds to do it.' Here, ladies *and* gentlemen, are nearly six hundred dollars, collected on this interesting occasion! a magnificent sum, and the very largest collected yet by the united efforts of one set. It will contribute materially to strengthen and enlarge the philanthropic views of the originators of this great plan. To-morrow morning a published report of it will appear in the 'SPIRIT OF THE AGE,' to edify mankind, and throw into the shade the rival efforts of Mrs. Carlton and her clique. The world will admire and laud the generous beings who, amidst prosperity and the demands of high-life, have not forgotten to pity and help the destitute."

"Poor creatures! how dreadful it must be to drink brown sugar in their tea! and eat coarse brown bread!" drawled a sentimental lady.

"Brown sugar and coarse bread, indeed! Soul's, madam! they'd be vastly well off if they could get that," said Miss Cicely, sharply; "there are *thousands* of them who cannot even get tea, leaving out the sugar and bread."

"Shocking! but I never go near them; I'm afraid of infection!" she observed.

"Yes," added Mrs. De Vere, "I do not mind giving money, but it is prodigiously disagreeable to go into their confined, stove-heated rooms, filled with litter, and screaming children."

"And they are so apt to be troublesome, when they see one takes an interest in them," remarked another. "But I cannot help feeling diverted, when I think of the rage Mrs. Carlton will be in to-morrow. She has only three hundred dollars to hand in to the managers of the fund."

"I must call on her!" said Miss Cicely, "to see how she bears it. I thought Mrs. Willoughby was to be present to-day!"

"Not she, indeed. She's vastly too proud to do things like the rest of the world. She has the strangest notions I ever heard of. I hear she gives employment to a number of poor people; but ask her to put her name down for a donation on a subscription list, if you want to be cut at once by her ladyship!" replied Mrs. De Vere. "I fancy, though, she's very busy just now about her step-daughter's wedding. Bessie has been invited to be a bridesmaid—"

"The wedding takes place very soon, now, I believe?" inquired Miss Cicely.

"Yes. After Easter! It's a great pity she's been so unfortunate in her choice! That Shirley is a perfect *roué;* but *they* know nothing about it!" said Mrs. De Vere, tossing her head.

"She might have done much better, *I* think," said Miss Cicely, looking severely virtuous. "She has had excellent offers—highly eligible ones, to my certain knowledge! It will be a great pity if he *is* a *roué!*" Then she helped herself plentifully to plum-cake, from a silver tray the footman was passing around with. "I would like a sandwich," she said, mournfully, "but it is Lent; and I *could* take a cordial—indeed, after the fatigues of the morning, I need one; but they fly to my head dreadfully, and inflame my nose—it's a great privation, but one must consult one's looks a little."

The benevolent object which called the ladies together being disposed of to the infinite satisfaction of all, and the *on-dits* of the day freely discussed, they dispersed in small parties, indulging in the most *piquant* anticipations of enjoyment at the utter discomfiture of the rival clique, when they perused the report of *their* liberality in the morning paper. Nothing could exceed their self-glorification; but the world called it, and they thought it, genuine charity. Perhaps it was! and if there *is* such a point in moral ethics as the "end sanctifying the means," it was strongly, nay, pardonably illustrated by this fashionable benevolence.

Mrs. Willoughby had been out with Edith shopping, during the forenoon, and when they returned, she found Mr. Moysa waiting in the drawing-room. She knew at once that he had brought her

news, and almost speechless, she could only offer her hand in welcome, and motion him to a chair near her.

"Has he come?" she inquired briefly. Her emotion was too powerful for conventional ceremonies, or long speeches.

"No, lady—but I very unexpectedly discovered something, this morning, which may lead to his identity. I was passing a Daguerrean gallery, and, observing a number of fancy sketches in a large frame at the door, curiosity impelled me to enter. Ascending a flight of steps, I opened the door at the top, and found myself in a handsome saloon, the walls of which were covered with the finest specimens of the art I ever saw. I inspected one after another, moralizing on the progress of the age, and wondering at the almost magical fidelity of the delineations around me. There was old age, youthful beauty, manhood, and the faces of young, innocent children, *unflattered* all—and all wonderfully distinct, yet the *contour* of every face so softly rounded; and the expression of every eye so soul-beaming—be patient, madam, I am nearly at the point of my adventure—I at last approached the only cluster of specimens I had not examined. A party of Indian chiefs, in their war-costume and wild-woods bravery, each in a separate frame, hung around in a circle, a fierce, ruthless-looking crew; and in their midst, looking so sad and beautiful, in his picturesque garb, what should I see but my young Italian! I wanted to tear it down from such ungenial companionship, and place it in my bosom!"

"Are you quite sure, sir—did not a fancied resemblance deceive you?" inquired Mrs. Willoughby.

"There is not such another face in the world, madam!" he replied, emphatically.

"My carriage has not left the door yet. Will you accompany me, Mr. Moysa, to this gallery?" she asked.

"With pleasure, madam. Consider me always at your service in this affair," he said, with alacrity.

"We will call for Mr. Bedford; he may be able to tell us at once whether your Ishmael and his Massoletti are one! I will not, however, tell him my object in requesting him to go; I wish the recognition to be unexpected; it will be more satisfactory; for alas! he hopes not as I do!" she said.

But Mr. Bedford suspected immediately, from the mere fact of seeing the noble-hearted Jew with her, that she had discovered another fancied link in her almost hopeless efforts for the recovery of her lost son. But he did not allude to the subject in the remotest way, for he considered the accomplishment of her hopes, eventually, so utterly impossible, and the result, which she wildly

prayed for, so blighting to all her cherished feelings in the certain disappointment that must ensue, that it sickened his very soul to think of it, and yet he dared not tell that *mother* so, for fear of driving her mad. To the world, she was, in her outward seeming, ever calm, passionless; and in the high-bred elegance of her manner, entirely self-possessed; but it was a fearful thing to one who knew the secrets of her inmost heart, to see the veil torn away, and its imprisoned woes revealed, when like chained maniacs they were roused, filling the awful solitude with their tribulation. He would never express a doubt again of the ultimate success of her search, whatever he might feel, but yield a passive assent to her fancies on the point.

Solitary old man! What knew he of the untold mysteries of a mother's heart? its prescient instincts—its self-sacrificing devotion? Spartan mothers, rejoicing over their sons slain in battle; the vision of Anticlea, cold and heroic amidst Plutonian shades; the mother of the noble Maccabees, the wife of Asdrubal, the Assyrian traitor, were *his* ideals of maternal endurance! The beautiful Idyl* of the mother, who went into the regions of death to search for her babe, and when told she could not reach it until she drank every drop of water from a broad, rapid river before her, replied, folding her hands meekly on her bosom, "*Am I not a mother?*—I will drink it all," was a monstrous and distorted fancy to him: he thought it something holy and beautiful, this never-failing fount of human affection—but he thought, too, that it was too apt to degenerate into a species of weakness, opposed to all rationality and sound argument.

When they arrived at the Daguerrean gallery, they were politely received by the artist, who was at the moment disengaged, and invited to examine the specimens of his wonderful art. Every luxury that a liberal and refined taste could provide contributed to the gratification of those who visited it. *Fauteuils*, lounges, marble tables covered with books and flowers, musical instruments and rich draperies, gilding, and brilliantly dyed carpeting, attracted for a moment the scrutiny of the party, as something indicating the rapid progress of the times towards a high state of refined luxury. Both gentlemen complimented the artist on the handsome *coup-d'œil* of his arrangements, then turned to the innumerable faces which, almost breathing, smiled down on them from the massive frames that enshrined them.† Mrs. Willoughby was insensibly interested; these were the first she had seen; but Mr.

* Hans Andersen's Tales.

† Whitehurst's handsome gallery is here referred to.

Bedford, always enthusiastic in his admiration for everything connected with the progress of art, could not refrain from expressing again and again his gratification, in terms which were highly complimentary to the enterprising proprietor. He quite forgot the object for which he suspected he was brought hither, and, like a child turned loose in a garden of flowers, scarcely knew where he should award the preference. Mr. Moysa went into another apartment to inspect one of the large cameras, and had yielded to the request of an assistant operator, whose artist eye was much struck with his remarkable and handsome face, to sit; a moment sufficed, and the plate on which the impression was made being taken into an adjoining room to be submitted to chemical tests, he strolled back to the gallery just as Mr. Bedford paused before the miniature of the young Italian.

"My God!" he exclaimed, after surveying it attentively, "this is surely Massoletti. See here, Moysa, do you know this?"

"I would know it in Egypt, sir," he replied, advancing; "that is just the way the poor young Gentile looked when he came to me to pledge his medallion."

"It is Massoletti, beyond all doubt!" said Mr. Bedford, taking it down, and handing it to Mrs. Willoughby. Without venturing to cast her eye on it, she carried it to a distant window, that any emotion it might conjure up might be concealed. She opened Vernon's miniature, then holding the two together compared them. Who dare dispute the resemblance of one to the other? One was Vernon—the other seemed his spirit, purified and softened, yet preserving the image of his former self. Both smiled on her. One with haughty lip, and the love light in his bold, bright eyes—the other sadly, imploringly. Both had the same golden hair—the self-same broad, fair brow—the same patrician mouth, and high, finely cut nose—and the large almond-shaped eyes! Who could dispute their kindred? And yet there was a wide difference in the expression of the faces. That of the man was instinct with pride, wild impulses, mingled with bravery, generosity, and defiant scorn—that of the boy was gentle, refined, and shadowed by the mellowed loveliness of the early doomed. And her heart responded in soft and gentle cadences to the glance of that silent and imploring look; wild distraction, and the bitter agony of years were hushed, and the emotions of her heart ebbed and flowed gently, like the rippling of tired billows after the tempest is spent. And she wept. Such tears as had long been strangers to her, and which, like angel visitants, refreshed the sterile and blighted waste of her heart. "If this is not he," she murmured, "then he is not." These were the only words she spoke, and drawing her veil over

her face, she beckoned to Mr. Bedford, who had been watching her every movement with intense anxiety, and in a low voice requested him to ask the artist "if he would dispose of the picture. Offer him any price for it—tell him there is a painful family secret connected with it, which gives it great value. And—and—ask him when the youth sat—perhaps he can give us some information where to find him."

Astonished, more at her calmness than the request, he hastened to comply with her wishes. The artist informed him that the "young Italian had wandered in one day about six weeks previous, with a picture for sale, which he offered at such a moderate price—a price in fact disproportionate to its merits as a work of art—that he purchased it without hesitation; and was so struck with the rare and touching beauty of his countenance, that he prevailed on him to sit for his likeness, to add to his collection. I consider it, sir, the finest specimen I have. It has certainly been very much admired."

"Of course," remarked Mr. Bedford, "I cannot insist on your disposing of what you so highly prize; but will observe that you would confer a great obligation by so doing. There are certain reasons, which I cannot just now explain, which will render the possession of it of some importance to the happiness of the lady who is with me. All I *can* say is that it bears a very strong resemblance to an only son she lost some years ago, of whom she has not a single memento."

"Under these circumstances, she must have it," replied the artist, with feeling. "I will take an impression from it this afternoon for myself, and to-morrow, if you will call sir, sometime during the morning, the original will be at your disposal. I consider it one of the most picturesque ornaments of my gallery."

"We owe you a thousand thanks!" exclaimed Mr. Bedford, always delighted to discover a noble trait or generous impulse in another; "your ready compliance in this matter does you honor, sir; but we wish to remunerate you handsomely for your trouble."

"We will attend to that to-morrow, if you please," replied the artist; "I see several ladies waiting, and am sorry to be obliged to leave you."

Mr. Moysa was taking leave at the door, but Mrs. Willoughby insisted on setting him down at his counting-room. Her requests were like commands always, and, on ordinary occasions, might be slighted; but there was a tremulousness in her voice, a pathos that would not allow him to evade her offer, on this.

"We have been thrown strangely together, Mr. Moysa," were

the only words she uttered during the drive; "and I feel that I can never repay the immeasurable obligations you have laid me under."

"I have done nothing, lady—you honor me too much; may the God of Abraham restore speedily to you the being in whom we are all so deeply interested!" he answered, understanding the sentiment that prompted the acknowledgment of her gratitude.

Day after day passed away, and yet no tidings of Massoletti were heard. Mrs. Willoughby had obtained the picture, and inclosed a handsome sum to the Daguerreotypist who so kindly relinquished it. In the solitude of her own apartment, she gazed on it hours at a time with the intensest emotions; tracing every lineament, and marking every feature, until at times, to her excited imagination, it seemed almost to stand forth from the frame and smile on her. Her softened heart saw the world through its medium. No argument or power could have lured her away from the sweet certainty that this wandering child of genius was her son. The glittering frostwork of mere intellectuality, and her stately pride of character, both of which had made her a marble thing amid life's sweet affinities, were floating, melting away, from the fettered soul, which, like a blossom held in thrall beyond its season of blooming by untimely cold, opened slowly its leaves and fragrance, until her whole nature rejoiced in the genial change. If a mendicant crossed her path, or a ragged child implored alms, the thought of *his* early poverty and friendlessness presented itself to her mind—then her hand, pulsating with more human and holy sympathies, her eyes beaming with kindlier glances, and her voice attuned to softer cadences, afforded not only relief, but consolation to the outcasts. In the abodes of poverty—to which her presence was not a stranger—her footsteps even fell more lightly, and stricken mothers, groaning under their burthens of suffering and need, wondered why a stranger should weep, when their own eyes were burning and dry. "Fear not," she said to a dying woman, who, in the thought of leaving an unprotected and helpless boy dependent on the grudging charities of the world, had found the *bitterness* of death—"fear not, he shall from henceforth be my care." And a smile gradually settled on the pinched cold features of the dying one, and, softly breathing an inarticulate word of benediction, she fell asleep. In that noble act, a sad vision of childhood, wandering and unprotected over the earth, inspired her, the vision of her own early lost.

But all these exalted and absorbing ideas had not the power to make her selfish. She was not forgetful of Edith, or her interests. It is true, she scarcely observed that she was less gay than usual,

or the indifference she manifested in the choice of her bridal paraphernalia, because she was quite satisfied that there was nothing wanting to make the approaching event a suitable and happy one, and rejoiced, at the same time, that her marriage with Walter Shirley, instead of severing the tie between herself and Edith, made it nearer.

Mrs. Lacy and Bessie De Vere, whose freedom from affectation and cheerful *bonhomie* had won much on Mrs. Willoughby, and rendered her a great favorite with Edith, were there daily, beguiling the time by the performance of a thousand little kindly offices, and an unceasing flow of blithesome chat.

"I begged Harry for a set of diamonds, for this occasion, before he went off," said Bessie one day, while she was examining a superb set of rubies Mrs. Willoughby had presented to Edith; "but he flung out in a pet at my extravagance, I fancy; then, fearing he had hurt my feelings, returned in a short time and kissed me, with the assurance that I should have a magnificent set if I married within a twelvemonth."

"Which you will certainly do, I predict," said Mrs. Lacy.

"Yes. I'm dying for diamonds. I've quite a passion for them," she replied, laughing.

"Diamonds will suit the gorgeous South famously. But, Bessie, what are Mr. Aubry's tastes?" inquired Mrs. Lacy.

"For everything bright and dazzling and merry, I believe. Between us we torment Alice and her pet nerves almost to death. I believe she wishes we were either dead or married and off, every day of her life. Aubry mimics that stupid Col. Forsyth, who pretends to be so desperately in love with Alice, and to smother my laughter I rattle over the piano keys, until she is almost in the hysterics. I wonder where on earth my exquisite brother Fred could have picked him up?" said the merry, thoughtless Bessie.

"Here's the wail, Miss Etha," said Paula, bringing in a dainty-looking package in her outspread hands.

"Lay it down, Paula. I will look at it presently," said Edith.

"In compassion to my sensitive curiosity, don't say 'presently,' dear Etha. I must be off immediately to Madame Le Roi's about my dress; so do let me have a peep at it before I go."

"Yes, open it, dear Bessie. Of course, open it," said Edith, abstractedly.

"Oh heavens! How superb! How magnificent!" exclaimed Bessie, holding up for inspection the large bridal veil, of so fine a texture and rich a pattern that the cobweb fabric could scarcely be seen beneath the cunning embroidery. She threw it over Edith's head, whose cheek grew very pale as, like a soft cloud, it

enveloped her, and she suddenly turned away, and, leaning on Mrs. Lacy's shoulder, burst into tears. Shocked and astonished, Bessie lifted it gently up, and imprinted a silent kiss on her cheek, then threw on her hat and shawl, and glided from the room, feeling deeply grieved that she had even unwittingly caused the friend she so dearly loved to shed a single tear. But she did not cause those tears.

"Edith," said Mrs. Lacy, when they were alone, and passing her arm tenderly around the agitated girl, drew her closer to her. "Edith, you weep. What mean those tears at such a time?"

"Oh, my friend, ask me not now. I fear I am sadly changed," she whispered, folding her hands together so tight that the nails grew purple.

"Edith, darling, are you happy? I conjure you by every holy and womanly feeling to pause if you are not," said Mrs Lacy, who had long ago suspected she was giving Walter Shirley a divided heart.

"Happy! Why do you doubt it, dear Mrs. Lacy? Because I have been weak enough to shed a few foolish tears?" she answered, throwing back the veil from her head and trying to smile.

"Not *foolish* tears, but tears *wrung* from your heart, Edith Willoughby. Oh, do not deceive yourself in this thing!" said Mrs. Lacy, kissing her burning brow.

"How very stupid the world would think you, if they heard your dolorous fancies about one so envied as I! Is it not fashionable to shed tears on the fetters which are to deprive us of our girlish freedom? Believe me, I have enjoyed mine too much not to regret it," she replied, endeavoring to assume a careless demeanor beneath the steady gaze of those dark searching eyes—but in vain; her lip quivered, and she stooped to gather up the rich bridal veil from her feet, where it had fallen, to conceal her emotion.

"My poor Edith! you are not yet initiated fully into the awful art of masking the troubled workings of your heart beneath a smiling exterior. You *are* envied, Edith, by many. The world, with its usual sagacity, fancies that, because you have all those advantages *it* adores, and are on the eve of marriage with a man who, with his fashionable *éclat*, is well-born, intellectual, and remarkable for his manly beauty and his apparent devotion to yourself, you must be necessarily happy. But I am not deceived," said Mrs. Lacy, again drawing Edith's unresisting head to her bosom. Her breath came up short and gaspingly, and Mrs. Lacy felt against her side the wild flutterings of her heart, but she did

not speak—she feared to give utterance to a sound, lest she should betray her agony.

"Oh, my Edith!" continued Mrs. Lacy, while her tears fell softly dripping like dews on the head which lay throbbing on her faithful breast. "Forgive me, beloved, if I stir up wild thoughts in your mind. If I probe too deeply a festering wound, it is to save you."

"To save me?" she murmured.

"To save you, Edith, from a sin which will distil its burning drops on your heart, year after year, until it becomes a ruin—awful ruin!" said Mrs. Lacy, solemnly.

"What am I doing? What have I done? Where am I? Cruel Mrs. Lacy!" she cried, shuddering and starting up. "By what authority do you utter such unkind words?"

"The authority of true friendship, which will dare much, my Edith, for its object," replied Mrs. Lacy, in a calm and lofty tone. "And now, even if you withdraw from me the affection I so highly prize; if you spurn me from you as an officious meddler; nay, if, in the impetuosity of roused feeling and passion, you should even *strike me*, I dare tell you, *you do not love Shirley*. You have been, poor bird, beguiled, lured, bewildered, by the spell of his fascinations; you have been entangled by influences which assumed the guise of love; your pride of character has been tampered with, and, to conceal a secret attachment—an honorable, noble attachment—which you believed to be unrequited and unknown, you consent to wed with him—"

"Oh God!" cried Edith, wringing her hands in the excess of her agony. "Madam, you presume on my inexperience and simplicity. I pray you, forbear. Your poetic imagination must have suggested these wild, romantic ideas." Then the last tinge of damask faded from her face, and she lifted her head erect, with a look of proud dignity.

"But, Edith, dear Edith Willoughby," said Mrs. Lacy, kneeling before her, and clasping both her hands in hers, "if you tell me that you love him—love him with a true, deep constancy that time nor death can sever; if you assure me that you regard, above all others, virtues in his character which he *may* possess; if you tell me that a separation from him would fill up your cup of life with bitterness and mourning, I will forbear. But oh, Edith, consider. A lifetime! No idle, passing pageant of an hour; but a lifetime together. Ties that dare not be broken, however they harrow the soul—however they gall the miserable heart. Vows, Edith, pronounced in the awful presence of GOD—vows from which naught

but death can release you. Are you prepared for the ordeal, child?"

"But Walter loves me," she slowly articulated.

"But does that consideration make your error less, beloved? Does it bring to your heart that pure and holy sentiment so essential to earthly happiness in such a connection? Why should you sacrifice the tranquillity of a lifetime to a spurious gratitude? Oh, Edith! pause. Examine this matter well in *all* its bearings, ere you perjure your soul," exclaimed Mrs. Lacy.

"This is awful. You subject me to a strange preparation for my bridal, Mrs. Lacy. A few months ago it might have availed; but now it is too late, all too late!" she cried, in a despairing tone. "You have wakened me rudely, madam. Why could you not let me dream on?"

"*It is not too late*, Edith, beloved; not too late. No sentiment of false honor or pride, no interest or influence, should ever cause a woman to play the traitor to Heaven and virtue, by sacrificing the holiest feelings of her nature to a barter which desecrates a divine institution. On the very steps of the altar the unholy compact should be broken, ere sealed forever."

"You have torn open my heart. You have, unbidden, read its secrets," cried Edith, glancing wildly around her. "But it is too late; although I love him not as his devotion to me merits—mind, I say this to you, and conjure you, for the sake of my peace, to keep it sacred—and can only give him a cold, yes, oh God! a cold, divided heart, yet have I the courage to do my duty. He shall never know it, or suspect that my affections were not wholly his."

"You will make but a poor dissembler, child. But if this is all, listen to me. I will impart something to you which may save you at last, and which I would fain have kept back. This man is unworthy of even your friendship. This day I learned from one who witnessed and knows the fact, that he has staked and lost nearly the whole of your fortune at the faro-table, so sure is he of accomplishing his base ends. He is a subtle, insinuating deceiver; trust not yourself in his keeping," said Mrs. Lacy, with quivering lips.

"He has been basely maligned. On my soul, madam, I believe it is false. His honor is unsullied. His only crime is loving me too well—me, who would give worlds to return it, but cannot—cannot!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears, and sobbing in Mrs. Lacy's arms.

"And thus, Edith, you wed him?"

"Yes, thus I wed him. My promise is irrevocably given. No human power can annul it," she answered, in a low firm voice.

"Then GOD and HIS holy angels help you, Edith Willoughby,

for human aid there will be none. Pardon the friendship which, at its peril, would fain have snatched you from so sad a destiny. However others may change, remember, in this heart you will ever find consolation and sympathy," said Mrs. Lacy, wiping away her fast falling tears.

Her mission of disinterested love was accomplished. It had failed, and henceforth she dared not refer again to the painful subject. When unoccupied by the duties of her classes, much with Mrs. Willoughby, but never again alone with Edith, who seemed to avoid it, although she behaved towards her with the same gentle and affectionate manner that was her wont. But that interview haunted her. The words of warning and truth rang in her ears and agonized her heart, until repose fled from it, and the sleepless silence of night was filled with terror. Unrefreshed and wearied, her sad eyes unclosed daily on the sunshine beaming so gladly through her chamber windows, and the blithesome songs of her pet bird mocked her with their cheerful trillings. The bright rare flowers that Walter Shirley never omitted to bring a single day, scarcely charmed her; she felt how brief was their life of beauty and fragrance—how human-like the withering of their glowing hues, like hopes, fresh and dewy in the sunshine, fleeting away in shadows and clouds. He noted the change, and felt that it boded him no good. He suspected that evil reports had reached her ears, and redoubled his assiduous tenderness of manner, to charm away the bad impressions; but she received it all, as she usually did, with a quiet, gentle air, but without emotion.

Her character was so truthful and unsuspicious, and her feelings so unsullied by the world, that she sometimes awed him; and his intriguing nature, utterly turned aside from its high destiny by degrading pleasures and evil aims, often recoiled back on itself as if touched by the spear of Ithuriel, when perchance an occasion offered to reveal the purity of her sentiments in opposition to his sophistries. Had she been a shrined vestal, his intercourse with her could not have been characterized by a more delicate or respectful manner. He claimed not the privileges of a favored lover, because he feared her too sensitive heart—a heart which he had more than suspected to be not solely his. Not that he loved her. How could a nature satiated with impure associations, and worn out by sensualities, *love* such a being as Edith Willoughby? But she gratified his pride, her fortune would minister to his wants and ambition, and her wonderful beauty grace still more his position, while her elegance and dignified manners would make his house more attractive to himself and others. But much more than this depended on his marriage. He was dreadfully involved in debt, and had borrowed

large sums of money on the credit of his approaching alliance with the heiress, which were to be refunded with interest immediately after the event. Debts of honor, or, in plain unvarnished language, swindling liabilities contracted at fâro and *rouge et noir*, were courteously lying *perdu* until the momentous hour arrived. His credit, honor, good name, and personal safety depended on the chance; all had been risked desperately, and every fascination of which he was a professed master, and every energy of his mind, were in full operation towards ultimate success.

Colonel Shirley, well satisfied with the aspect of affairs, had visited Mrs. Willoughby twice since Edith's engagement to his son; and after his last visit had started immediately for the South, whither he was called on urgent business, connected with the heavy mortgages which encumbered his estates. It was an affair that could not be delayed, or he would on no account have omitted being present at the nuptials, which for long years he had had so much at heart.

Mr. Bedford secluded himself more than he had ever done. He affected to be engaged in compiling his astronomical observations, and writing a profound thesis on the subject; but the truth was, he was pained and displeased at Edith's choice, but, under existing circumstances, and the relative position of the parties to each other, felt that it would be ill timed and officious to interfere or even express his disapprobation.

Mrs. Willoughby was in the same hopeful and exalted state of feeling about her son; and, although she mingled as usual in society, her pleasures were all confined to the inner world of her heart, with its hopeful instincts, and newly risen bow of promise, which she never wearied of contemplating.

With her nephew she was well satisfied. He realized her ideal of a chivalrous and accomplished gentleman, and felt that in confiding Edith to his care, she was sealing her happiness. No pains or expense that good taste and affection could suggest did she spare in the costly and elegant preparation of her step-daughter's *trousseau;* wishing everything to correspond with her undiminished love for her.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FATHER AND MOTHER. THE LOST AND FOUND.

One morning Mrs. Willoughby was sitting alone in her *boudoir*, writing a friendly letter of invitation to General Beverly and his family to be present at her step-daughter's nuptials, when the door opened, and an old man clad in dark homespun entered. Over his broad but stooping shoulders masses of white hair fell waving; and his countenance was so pale and woe-begone, and there was such a roused fiery spirit glowing in his deep set gray eyes, that Mrs. Willoughby had some difficulty at first in recognizing her old and faithful retainer, Markham.

"Mr. Markham!" she said, rising and extending her hand, "I am glad to see you. Pray, be seated."

"Are you glad, lady? I was glad too once. Glad in my life, lady, and every breath was a peace-offering to my Father God. My dame—my children—my ripening fields—the lowing herds—the yellow corn waving in the summer winds—the forest trees—the wild daisies under my feet—filled my whole life with gladness; but it is all passed away—'like the morning cloud and early dews,' it is gone, and—and a heavy blow has fallen on my age!"

"My excellent, good old friend!" said Mrs. Willoughby, much shocked at his care-worn look and strange language, "has any trouble befallen you or yours that I can relieve? If so, be assured of finding a friend in me. Or perhaps Dame Markham is ill—or Amy?"

"You cannot relieve us, lady! When years ago I dug four little graves, one after another, out on the slope of the hill, and with an aching heart laid our gladsome children beneath the mould, I thanked God that our Amy was spared; but now I'd bless Him, if she too had been laid beside her brothers; on my bended knees I'd thank him!" said the old farmer, with a quivering lip.

"What mean you, friend Markham? What of my god-daughter Amy? What has befallen her?" inquired Mrs. Willoughby.

"She's gone!" he exclaimed, bursting into tears of terrible anguish, "our pretty Amy's gone!" Scarcely comprehending him, but filled with the saddest forebodings, she forbore questioning him further just then, and left the room a few moments, that he

might weep unrestrained by her presence; thinking that tears would soften the sternness of his grief. When she returned, he was more calm, and she prevailed on him to swallow some strong coffee that she brought him. "Now tell me," she said, sitting beside him, while she laid her hand kindly on his shoulder, "tell me the worst."

"You know, lady!" he said, after heaving a few heavy, gasping, sighs, while a stern and bitter expression settled on his features, "*you* know how proud we were of her. There was something so dainty like and nice about our Amy, that, like two silly old people, we thought it would be a pity to set her to any of the coarse work of the farm. We wanted to see her a lady, and give her a training unbecoming her situation in life. From that folly has flowed all our bitterness—alack—alack! But her voice, singing like a lark, and her small feet dancing over the sanded floor, were the sweetest music I ever heard. Then she was never idle. She was either busy with some tasty thing or another to make the old place look fine; or tending her dairy, or bee hives, or flowers, that were never out of order. Her butter was the sweetest, her cream the cleanest in the market; and her honey and flowers always brought the highest prices, because the one was so clear and well flavored, and the others so tastily tied together! We did not require her even to do these little things, she took them up of herself; and we let her spend the money they brought as she liked. But there was one thing that always grieved me, lady. She seemed to scorn her equals; the young men that came some time to see her; and, tricked off in her white dress and blue ribbons, would be hardly civil to them! I scolded her time after time about it—the dame fretted too; but she used to throw herself in my arms, and press her soft cheek to mine and tell me, 'she wanted no sweetheart but her mother and I;' and comb my hair; and sing 'Flowers o' the Forest,' until I thought it was all right." Here the old man paused to wipe away the big tears that were rolling over his cheeks. "But she was a good affectionate child—alack! that she ever heard the voice of the tempter!" he continued in a broken tone. "Lady, your love and Miss Edith's kindness were her glory. She used to talk for hours of her beautiful god-mother, meaning you, madam, and say that 'some day a great lord would come from over the seas, and take Miss Edith away to foreign parts; she was too much like a princess to marry here.' This come of her reading novels more than she did good books—but it was no use to scold; if we did, she would only laugh the merrier, and tell us such beautiful stories she read out of them, that the spinning-wheel stopped, and I would lay aside my task, whatever it

might be, to listen—then her old doting mother and I would push back our spectacles, to wipe away the foolish tears. Oh I can see her now! her blue eyes—her beautiful, bright hair—and her lips like holly berries in the snow. * * * When you and Miss Edith left Woodreve, lady, she promised to go over once or twice a week to look after the plants and birds that Miss Edith used to tend. She was always proud to get to Woodreve, it was so grand there; and the organ, and pictures, and books delighted her. But, lady, at last she went oftener—then every day—and was silent when she came back, and would sit with her cheek resting on her hand, and her eyes fixed in the fire, ruminating for hours at a time—then she began to grow pale—and her eyes were very often red and swollen. We got almost distracted about her; but still she would go over to Woodreve to watch Miss Edith's flowers—through rain, snow, and sunshine, she went. But one day she stayed a little later than usual. I went over to see what kept her—we felt afraid she had been taken ill there—but no! Would that I had found her dead among the dried blighted leaves of the forest! She was not in the house, and I went down to the woods to seek her; I found her—yes—I found her, walking alone with a young gentleman, who had his arm around her; presently he stooped down and kissed her. I said, at a glance, he was not her equal—from the white fingers decked with rings, and his fine clothes, I knew he was above her, and trying to deceive her—poor innocent lamb! I felt as if the lightning had struck me—I could not speak—I only walked up to her, and seized her arm, and dragged her away. * * * She would tell us nothing, lady—not even his name. I let her go no more to Woodreve, but she moped, and cried, and talked in her sleep until we thought she was growing melancholy. A great sorrow, like heavy clouds, gathered over our cottage—the place was so still and cheerless—the dairy no longer tidy—the winter flowers drooped and died—she noticed nothing. But oh, my good God! what was it all to her going away as she did—stealing off from her old parents at midnight, through a pelting rain, to go away with a base stranger who will deceive—then forsake her! I'd rather she had died—oh yes, lady—I'd rather laid her pretty head down in the dust for the worms—"

"And have you had no tidings of her since, my poor friend?" asked Mrs. Willoughby, much affected.

"No. No tidings, lady. I've searched the whole country side since she disappeared, about ten days agone, but I've heard naught. Some railed at me, and told me 'I'd spoilt the girl;' others wagged their heads and said, 'they always thought our pride would have a fall.' One told me, 'I'd brought it all on myself, and couldn't

expect to be pitied by honest folk.' Their uncharitableness was like a two-edged sword through my heart, for, alack! what they said was too true. But I'd heed it not, if I could only find my stray lamb, and bring it back to the fold; then slay the villain that lured her off. Oh, if I could by one fell blow crush his life out of him, I could die in peace!" said the now infuriate old man, gnashing his teeth and tearing his hair.

"Mr. Markham, your trial is, indeed, a bitter one. I know not how to comfort you," said Mrs. Willoughby; "but hope for the best. There are some calamities wherein words of consolation avail not. This is one of them. Poor Amy may be somewhere in the city. In view of this, I will cause a secret but strict search to be instituted to recover her. I do not know what other plan to suggest. As soon as I have breakfasted, I will drive to Woodreve, and go over to see your dame. I will inquire into this matter, and, if it can be sifted, I will do it. Try and be calm, my poor, afflicted old friend; you are the stronger vessel, and must support the aged and broken-hearted wife, who looks to you in this hour of sore tribulation, however much it may cost you."

"Thank you, lady," said the old man, rising, and taking up his hat and staff. "May the Father of the wandering and friendless bless you for your kindness this day! You say true, I cannot be comforted. Would she had died in her sinless childhood! Would to God she had died!"

Another painful and trying scene awaited Mrs. Willoughby at the Farm Cottage; but her noble and generous heart shrunk not from it. The poor old mother of the erring girl was heart-broken and almost maddened by the blow. She had not shed a tear since the hour she was made conscious that the fair and only blossom of their roof-tree was reft away. Her hair, in a few days, had grown very white, and where only a few wrinkles were seen on her healthful countenance, deep furrows now appeared. Pallid and wan, she dragged with difficulty her footsteps along, pausing at intervals to wring her hands and utter low moans, or sit motionless, for hours at a time, in her arm-chair, beside the silent spinning-wheel. How could human heart minister to such grief as this? It monopolized every sentiment. Neither kindness nor uncharitableness could affect it. It was a monstrous woe, that set at defiance the ordinary laws of nature, which had been outraged and wounded beyond the art of earthly healing. It was one of those things which tear away suddenly every tendril of the soul from their close embraces on the bosom of its mother earth, and cast it, helpless and bleeding, on the mercy and strength of the most high God; and, if it finds not refuge there, begins a

foretaste of the darkness and wildness of despair beyond the grave. Mrs. Willoughby could not direct that aged and stricken one to the waters of healing which flow from the throne of the heavenly Comforter. She knew not how; the way was all strange to her; but, like a brooding seraph casting its glory and peacefulness around, came the thought, "Comfort her, O Lord; bind up this bruised and lacerated heart. Comfort her, O Father of light!" And thus, in silence, she prayed for another; she, who had never, amidst her own tribulation, prayed for herself.

It was like the dawning of a new existence on her, and the holiness of her charity, so unselfish, so like a gift from Heaven, purified and strengthened her soul.

Her inquiries at Woodreve availed nothing. "No one had been there," the servants informed her, "but young Mass' Shirley and a poor painter lad, that wandered about here and there, and spoke so gentle to everybody that all the folks loved to see him about."

"When was he here?" she asked the man.

"He down yonder in de woods now, missus," he replied.

"Bring him to me. But no, I'll go. I must see him," she exclaimed, starting up, and going with speed towards the forest.

"Ki—yi!" ejaculated the negro—"what done come over missus?" And in his wonder he distended his eyes and scratched his head, until small tufts of wool were borne away on the winds, a heaven-send to the birds, who were scratching for materials wherewithal to line their nests.

Far down into the silent woods she hastened. The echo of her own footsteps on the dead leaves, and the quick panting of her breath, were the only sounds she heard in the solitude. An early spring verdure bloomed on the trees, and many a wild flower was bursting into beauty in the quiet haunts of the wilderness. But she saw them not. She pursued the lovely phantom of her heart. She had come forth to seek the wandering bird of another, and would find her own in its native woods at last. Wonderful, ecstatic thought! She would fold the weary, tempest-tost one to her bosom, and hold it there, that it might wander on weary wings no more over life's flood. Hither and thither her restless footsteps bore her—in every glen, on the hill-side, amidst the thick shrubbery of cedars around her mother's tomb. There was but one spot she had not visited: the fountain of Hecuba. There she had not sought him; and now, almost worn out with fatigue, she determined, cost her what it might, to wend her way thither to that scene of past joys and anguish, that for long years she had not had the courage to look upon. It was concealed from general view by

an overgrowth of untrained shrubbery and vines, that formed a wild but beautiful screen around it. As she approached it, and heard the tinkling of its waters in the marble basin, and saw its spray, gleaming like stray diamonds through the leaves, she stood still, and leaned for support against a tree. Her thoughts winged their rapid flight back through the dreamy vista of time to that hour when the daring and impetuous Vernon won her love, and her heart, still true to his memory, dreaded to recall too vividly the past by looking on the spot, where every leaf and spray would remind her of all—all she had suffered, all she had endured. But who can chain the wizard memory? The spell of those hours of rapture floated like storm-mists gilded by the sunshine around her, then passed away; and up rolled a vision of tempest-torn billows, howling winds, shipwreck and death. Uttering a stifled cry, she sprang forward, and reaching forth her hands tore aside the tangled vines, that she might fall prostrate on the earth and water it with her tears; but there, leaning on the marble rim of the fountain, stood the being she sought, pale, beautiful, and sad. He looked so like Vernon that the illusion was complete. She stretched out her arms towards him, and, in a trembling tone, breathed his name.

It was Massoletti, who, lured thither by the beautiful scenery, and some confused and mysterious thoughts, which made him almost fancy that under another form, in another state of being, he had visited the spot, spent day after day wandering about the grounds with his sketch-book, dreaming lovely visions, and imparting to his drawings their ideal brightenings. He started back when Mrs. Willoughby appeared so suddenly, and snatching off his cap, bowed, then was hurrying away, when, with an imploring gesture, she exclaimed in Italian, "Stay—stay—I have sought you long; fly not now that I find you."

"Bella senora, I am only a poor artist, a stranger in the land," he said, baring his head again and standing still.

"Yes, I know," she replied in a calmer tone, fearing he might become alarmed and fly; "tell me your name!"

"Massoletti, senora," he answered.

"And have you no friends in this strange land, Massoletti?" she asked, almost overcome by emotion.

"One, senora, yes; one great friend that the Sancta Maria sent me; one kind angel friend, Senor Henri De Vere; I would have died but for him," he replied, fervently.

"May Heaven reward him then!" she ejaculated. "This is my park, my domain; I am mistress of it all, Massoletti—it is in my power to be also your friend, now that he is gone. Shall I be your friend?"

"Gone! Senor Henri gone?" he exclaimed, wringing his hands and weeping bitterly, unmindful of her presence; but suddenly he thrust his hand into his bosom, and drawing out a small crucifix, pressed it to his lips, then, contemplating the holy image, murmured, "He too wandered and suffered—He too was forsaken!" The reflection appeared to soothe him; it was a friend which, exhibiting patience and resignation under their divinest aspects, gave him courage and peace; and wiping away the traces of tears from his cheeks he asked, timidly, "Will he return, Senora?"

"He will return—but I know not when. But come now with me, Massoletti; I wish to hear your history. Do you know, boy, that your Father in heaven is shedding sunshine and joy around your way? that you will wander no more, but have riches, and the power to be good and great? Come, and tell me your story!" she said, reaching out her hand and taking his within it; scarcely able to control her joy, for it never once entered her mind to doubt the fact of his being her long-lost child. In silence he followed her, bewildered by her words and manner, until, throwing open the door of her library, she conducted him within. The western light (it was now near sunset) glowed through the stained glass, and filled the room with gorgeous shadows, and a faint fragrance from a half-withered cluster of flowers floated on the air. She led him to the cushioned pile, where years ago she had left her sleeping child, and watched with intense emotion the blended expression of fear and wonder which gathered on his countenance as he gazed around him.

"Dost thou remember it now, boy?" she said at last, in a low, soft voice.

"Senora Bella, I dreamed of it. I was a little child. I cannot remember well, but there was music in my dream," he answered.

She arose and went to the organ, which she opened, and with rare and masterly touches poured out her soul in grand and solemn strains until the hushed air thrilled with pealing melodies. The boy clasped his hands over his closed eyes and leaned back. A soft glow suffused his pale face, and his lips parted in a gentle smile. Presently the last soft harmony died away, and, standing beside him, Mrs. Willoughby lifted his hands away from his lustrous eyes. "Tell me of that dream now," she said.

"It was long ago, senora—long ago, that I dreamed it—a strange, beautiful dream, filled with flowers, smiles, and music; but I awoke in a dark forest, and was cold. I remember two eyes, black and piercing, that never seemed to wink or close, but

watched me, until I feared to open mine. Then I was on the wild seas, senora bella; rough men were about me, swearing, frowning, and wrathful; more dreadful than the stormy billows and howling winds. Then I was in Rome, where I lived like the birds, picking up crumbs and fruit, and drinking from its delicious fountains. The people called me the 'Picture child,' because I cared for nothing else. At last a poor English artist took me. I was happy. I went with him every day to the Vatican; I mixed his paints, I watched him at his labors, until I too became a painter. But he died. Then there was blood, and fire, and warfare in the streets of Rome; the yellow waves of the Tiber were crimsoned with gore; all was madness and confusion—I fled. At Naples the captain of a vessel about to sail pitied me as I sat, pale and hungry, on the pier; he bade me follow him, and he brought me hither, to this beautiful land. This is all, senora!" he said slowly, as if trying to remember incidents half forgotten.

"You had a medallion—one like this?" said Mrs. Willoughby, showing him hers.

"Oh yes," he exclaimed, starting forward and grasping it eagerly, "*that* was no dream; it was always with me. I thought there might be an *Agnus Dei* in it, and never parted with it but once—then saw it no more!" he said sadly. "But perhaps, senora, this is mine; it is, it must be the same!"

"You have not dreamed. Here was your childhood spent—from this spot where you now sit you were stolen away in your sleep, and I—I am your mother, child," she exclaimed, with an *abandon* of feeling she could not control, as she clasped him to her heart and kissed his brow; "never shall you wander again—never leave the shelter of my love, poor stricken one!"

His head drooped heavily; the flood of recollection, and the overpowering realization of his dreamy hopes, were too much for his delicate organization, and he fainted on the bosom which so tenderly supported him. With almost superhuman strength, she bore him towards the window, and threw it open; then bared his throat and chest, that the cool evening air might revive him. On the left side of his chest, just under the collar-bone, she observed a cross, and underneath it the outline of a bird transfixed with an arrow, tattooed on the white blue-veined flesh. When he recovered and saw the same lovely face bending over him, he feared to speak lest it should all be a dream which would be dispelled by his voice, for, poor child, he had many such, and their brightness only made the desolation of his waking hours more sad. "Perhaps," he thought, "it is a sweet vision of the holy Madonna, come down

from heaven to whisper, 'Child, I am thy mother,' that my heart may not faint in its loneliness." Then he folded his hands, and lifted his eyes in silent devotion to hers.

Golden and crimson halos from the rich windows floated around, and shed their light on her pale brown hair and white forehead, imparting to her countenance so spiritual and rapt an expression that his excited mind might well be pardoned for the beautiful fancy.

"I am your mother," again whispered the gentle voice; "we will part no more."

"Madre bella," he said musingly, "but it is a wonderful mysetry. O MEI DEUS! thy angels have been with me through all."

"Yes, they have walked with you; the angels of God have led you hither in safety, home to your mother's bosom, child," she said, as soft glimmerings from the dawn of faith fell like star-light about her soul, gemming its darkness, and smiling in lambent rays on the clouds of human suffering now fleeing far away. Then she told him how, long ago, she had lost him, and how she had sought him sorrowing, year after year, until his mind was imbued with the same calm serenity and certainty that pervaded hers. Together they left Woodreve, and though it was late when they arrived in town, Mrs. Willoughby directed her coachman to drive to Mr. Moysa's. Fortunately, he had been detained at his place of business later than ordinary, by the pressure of imperative affairs, and had just retired to his private apartment to glance over the evening papers.

"Ishmael found at last!" he exclaimed, starting up when Mrs. Willoughby and the young Italian entered.

"I could not find the senor," said Massoletti, advancing and speaking eagerly. "I painted a Heli for the senor; but when I sought him, he was gone. I feared he was dead."

"No, only moved away, Ishmael. Sit down, madam; pray pardon my inattention. I was so astonished when I saw him glide in like an apparition, that I could see nothing else," said Mr. Moysa

"Not more astonished than I to find him at Woodreve, whither I had gone on business. He was sketching there—but you shall hear the story another time, Mr. Moysa. I called to get the medallion and return the sum you advanced on it."

"Madam, that *Heli* is all I will except; a picture is all I bargained for, and one Heli is worth ten common subjects. Here is the trinket which has led to such a strange *denouement*," he replied, taking the trinket from the cabinet. Massoletti sprang forward with a beaming countenance when he beheld his long-lost treasure,

and Mrs. Willoughby, touching the diamond spring, it flew open, revealing to his astonished eyes the painting within. He looked from the miniature to her, and from her to the miniature again; there could be no mistake, the resemblance was so wonderfully perfect; and, pressing it to his heart and lips, he exclaimed, "Madre bella! and thou with me all my life, and I not know it!"

"Wonderful are the ways of the Most High! The daughter of Pharaoh found Moses where he was left to perish on the waters of the Nile; the sons of Jacob found Joseph their brother, whom they thought dead; and you, lady, have found your long-lost child after years of mourning," said the Jew, with moistened eyes

"Oh, sir, it was your kind benevolence which led to it; to you am I indebted for this coveted blessing. Had you driven him away instead of acting as you did, in all probability I should never have found him. Our God, through you, has wrought the wonder. I try in vain to find language strong and warm enough to express my gratitude, but it is all too poor; Heaven alone can reward you. Heaven will give you in return tenfold blessings for the good act you have performed," said Mrs. Willoughby with profound emotion while she folded the boy's hand in both her own.

That night she had a private interview with Mr. Bedford. He was not quite so decidedly convinced as was she that the young stranger was her son; but he did not say so, and only advised her to keep the affair secret a few weeks that they might have time to investigate it more fully. "Send Massoletti, or Arthur Vernon, if you will, to Woodreve. In a short time, you will return there yourself. The world must be prepared for the *denoucment*. All who have your history, Miriam, know your child was stolen, and if you are in town when this romantic discovery of him is announced, you'll repent it but once; you'll be literally taken by storm and gabbled to death by the fashionable Vandals of the day. I will go with him, and watch over him, and see that no harm befalls him."

"Your advice is judicious, dear Mr. Bedford. I thank you for your kind suggestions and offer of protection; but Edith, we must not forget Edith. You must be present at her marriage," said Mrs. Willoughby, hesitating.

"Since I must speak, Miriam, I may as well speak frankly. Understand then, once for all, that I highly disapprove of this match for Edith, and cannot see her married. I am sorry, but I will not consent to it, or sanction it even by my presence. My advice was never asked. I was not consulted at all, or should have expressed my sentiments earlier, and furnished good and abundant reasons for any opposition I might have offered. But it is too late now. I will be ready at an early hour in the morning to take Arthur to

Woodreve." Mrs. Willoughby could not endure the idea of separating voluntarily from her son, but, understanding fully the propriety of his suggestions, her better judgment induced her to yield to them. She thanked Mr. Bedford, with the assurance that "her heart would feel perfectly at rest regarding the welfare of young Vernon, while honored by such care as his; everything should be in readiness for him to accompany him early the following morning." Of Edith she spoke not another word; her pride was wounded, and she felt too much disturbed and hurt at what she considered his strange opposition, to refer to it again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"How like a mountain devil in the heart
Rules the unreined ambition! Let it once
But play the monarch, and its haughty brow
Glows with a beauty that bewilders thought
And unthrones peace forever. Putting on
The very pomp of Lucifer, it turns
The heart to ashes, and with not a spring
Left in the desert for the spirit's lip,
We look upon our splendor and forget
The thirst of which we perish."

WILLIS.

"Love is a lamp unseen
Burning to waste, or if its light is found
Nursed for an idle hour—then idly broken—"

WILLIS.

THE sun had not yet risen, when a traveller was seen guiding his horse slowly up the acclivity of a mountain path. No human sound disturbed the grand harmony of the magnificent scenery around him. The dashing of an unseen and rapid river over a rocky bed; at intervals, a wild sough of wind through the dew-gemmed groves of cedar and *arbor vitæ*, which sprang fantastically from the limestone cliffs; and the *Te Deum* which burst from the mellow throats of innumerable birds, as they flitted to and from their nests, making the air tremulous with the melody of song and rustling wings, were heard; sweet, wild sounds, befitting the solemn beauty of the scene, which echoed away in prolonged and softened cadences through the rocky solitudes. It was sublime,

the whispering of the morning, and the half dreamy repose of nature!

Towards the south-east, a deep, narrow glen opened a vista between the forest-clad mountain the traveller ascended, and a similar one on the left, through which, at the distance of several miles, portions of the lofty and picturesque Blue Ridge could be descried, bounding the horizon of the great southern valley, in undulating lines, against the crimson sky. In huge masses of purple and gold, the clouds rolled in majestic order along the Orient, kindling up the valley, and crowning the hills with coronals of lambent glory, as they ushered in, like an army with banners, the rising sun, which, as its glittering disk, like a diadem of fire, glowed above the mountain peaks, shed a broad effulgence over the land. Pausing an instant, the traveller dismounted, and throwing the bridle of his horse over his arm, stood in mute admiration of the scene. The more distant views were bathed in modified and changeful hues of light; and billows of rose-hued mists, flecked with gold, sparkled like inland lakes amidst the valleys and glens around, while clumps of trees, looming up through them, were the *isola bellas* of the fairy waves.

The path became narrower and steeper, but, ascending still, he observed that he was, as he thought, at the head of the glen. He halted and cast an inquiring glance around him, and discovering an abrupt opening by the side of the pathway where the glen appeared to terminate, in a precipitous and narrow chasm, he cautiously approached it, and bending over, saw with a shudder perpendicular cliffs, clad with stunted evergreens and trailing vines, which grew from the interstices of the rocks opening to a fearful depth beneath him. "It is the Natural Bridge!" he shouted, recoiling back to safer footing; "I knew not I was near it!"* The mists rolling away, he soon discerned the rapid torrent whose brawling waters he had heard, apparently issuing from a cavern below, which wound its way along like a thread of silver, until it was joined by a mountain brook that dashed like a torrent of pearls over a high limestone bank into the glen, then, gliding more placidly, it crept with many bright and sinuous windings through the valley. He was now on the summit of an arch, an hundred feet above the fretted waters; an arch not fashioned by human skill, but formed out of the solid rock—uniting in one graceful curve of beauty a dissevered mountain. No man could tell its

* The traveller, in approaching the Natural Bridge, as we have described, very often finds himself on the summit of the arch, ere he is aware of being near it. It can, however, be seen from a great distance in the valley.

age—the hunted nomad of the forest had no tradition concerning its formation; an equal wonder to all, no tongue can tell whether the waters of the great flood washed it out, or the designs of the Almighty architect hewed it there in creation's morning, to teach the pigmy, man, with his proud aspirings, humility. The traveller, after musing on the magnificence of the scenery displayed with lavish grandeur on every hand, and baring his head as if in reverence of the great Power which had given it being and stupendous beauty, was about descending a path that seemed to wind gradually down to the south of the bridge, to view the majestic structure from below, when a female form, crouched among some loose rocks, almost on the margin of the precipice, arrested his attention. Her arms clasped her knees, on which her head rested, and a blanket, gayly embroidered with shreds of dyed bark, fell in not ungraceful folds around her. The sound of the horse's hoofs, clanking on the rocks, roused her, and lifting her head she gazed, at first with indifference, on the traveller; anon, a hue of crimson suffused her swarthy face, and, glaring steadfastly on him, she slowly arose, and folding her arms on her breast, stood motionless and seemingly breathless. There were deep lines of suffering on her face, mingled with brighter traces of beauty, but it was all shadowed over by an expression which conveyed an idea of past suffering and desolation. Col. Shirley, for it was he, suddenly paused and quailed as if a phantom had risen in his path. He had not seen her for years, long years; but he knew her, and her sudden appearance was like an omen of evil; he bit his lips with rage, but suppressed any exhibition of his feelings, and exclaimed—

"Ya-gee-wah! Here?"

"Why wanders the 'White Panther' so far from his wigwam alone? Is the song of the mocking-bird hushed?" she asked in a low, sweet voice.

"It is hushed, Ya-gee-wah!" he replied, and almost imperceptibly his lips quivered, but it did not escape her keen observation; "many winters ago it fled to the Great Spirit, where the prairies blossom forever!"

"Many winters ago the 'White Panther' fled from the Algonquin hunting-grounds, and left in the forest a wounded fawn. It had learned to nestle beside the 'White Panther' like a wild dove amidst the leaves. When the tracks of the 'White Panther' were no more seen in the forest, it was like a dog-wood blossom, torn from the dew and the sunshine. It withered. As the White Panther fled from the wounded fawn, so fled the mocking-bird from the wigwam of her pale-faced lover! It is well!" she said with a low, bitter laugh.

"But, Ya-gee-wah, the snows of winter are sprinkled on our heads; we must forget the spring-time; the spirit-winds of the West will ere long carry us on their wings to the happy hunting-grounds. We must forget the spring-time, which can never return," he replied, much annoyed by her bitter reference to past days.

"After many harvests were gathered in," she continued, after a short silence, "the White Panther came again to the hunting-grounds of the Algonquin. In the silence and darkness of night he came; but his moccasons made no sound, for the forests were white with snow, and the voice of the birds were still. The warriors and braves of our tribe were far away, hunting the elk and the beaver. Ya-gee-wah was lonely as the whippoorwill in the shadow of night, and her heart was like the frozen spring beside her wigwam, covered with dead leaves. But when the White Panther came, the sunshine and dew returned. Like a spring bird, Ya-gee-wah rejoiced, for the frosts melted away from her heart. But the White Panther had found among his people the tongue of a snake. He whispered poison in the ear of Ya-gee-wah, and she listened. Then he passed away like a rolling cloud, and when the blue-bird whistled in the woods, Ya-gee-wah was journeying alone through pathless forests, to find the magnolia-tree, from whose white flower she was to steal the inner leaf."

"You are mad, Ya-gee-wah. Go to your medicine-man to drive the spell away. Here is silver. I can stay no longer to listen to your ravings," said Col. Shirley, laying a handful of silver on her folded arms. With a wild gesture and a look of ineffable scorn, she flung it from her. Some fell with an echoing sound far down over the precipitous cliffs, and many a broad piece lay glittering on the gray rocks around her feet. He would have passed on, but she sprang forward and planted herself directly in front of him, effectually blockading the narrow pathway. Her eyes glittered, and her lips were drawn back from her white even teeth with a ghastly expression of concentrated rage and revenge. Col. Shirley was no coward, with all his faults; but he feared an Indian's revenge. He knew that her desperate nature once roused, she would value life but little in a death-struggle with him, and it was a fearful place for such an encounter, narrow and steep, with a yawning gulf more than a hundred feet deep on either side. Assuming, therefore, a calm and fearless demeanor, he leaned on his horse's saddle and fixed his eyes on hers, on the *qui vive* for the slightest movement. But she stirred not. The upheaving of her breast, and the suppressed breathing, as it hissed through her teeth, told only of the raging tempest within; but it

gradually became more gentle, the tumultuous billows of passion rolled away from her bosom back into the depths of her heart, and she was once more calm and stern and scornful as she spoke.

"*The pale-faces dream.* Listen! Ya-gee-wah, the sun-cloud —ha! ha! ha!—did the bidding of the serpent-tongue. She found the magnolia-tree, and tore away the leaf that grew from its heart. She bore it away on her bosom. It did not die. The Indian was more merciful than the false-hearted pale-face. Ya-gee-wah could not shed innocent blood."

"Ha!" almost shouted Col. Shirley. "Ha! Does the boy live?"

"Ya-gee-wah cannot tell. It was wafted away in a big canoe, far, far away over the great Salt Lake. The forests were red, and the maize white for the harvest, when Ya-gee-wah made the wigwam of a mother desolate. Then returned the Sun-Cloud back for her reward. But the White Panther's trail could not be seen. There were no moccason tracks to tell whither he had gone. Then Ya-gee-wah sought his wigwam beyond the Great Valley. It was empty. Then she heard the rattle of the snake she had coiled in her heart; and they told her—the pale-faces told her—of the mocking-bird and its fledgeling; how they had many summers nestled in his heart; how they nestled there, even when the poor Indian was cheated by his songs of love. Ya-gee-wah fled back to her people; fled like a deer with the hunter's arrow deep in her side."

Col. Shirley remembered it all. He bowed his head on the saddle, and the tide of bitter retrospection rolled its ruthless flood over his soul. He remembered his dark-eyed bride, his summer hunt along the borders of the great lakes, and how, to while away the time, he had won the Indian maiden's love—then deserted her, to return again to his home and his fair young wife. He thought of his infant son, and his wild schemes of ambition for the boy's future; the image of the young mother, fading away like a fairy mist from his bosom to the grave; and the ripening of the seeds of evil in his soul. All this was present, and there was no sweetness mingled with the goading memories. He remembered well how, to accomplish his diabolical plans, he had once more sought the flower of the Algonquin tribe, to beguile her still with the tale of his love, and lure her to evil; which, trusting and self-sacrificing, she did, by stealing away, according to his injunctions, his widowed sister's child. His plan was to leave her without an heir to the paternal estates, that his son might inherit them; but afterwards he coveted all her vast possessions, for his own were wasted; and he determined, if good management and cunning could effect it, that Edith Willoughby should, at some future day,

wed his son. But how shrunk his guilty soul—how startled he felt now, on the very eve of the accomplishment of his dream of years, to hear that the child whose death he had planned escaped the doom prepared for it!

"Whither go you, Ya-gee-wah?" he asked, abruptly, as a faint idea of her ulterior object presented itself to his mind.

"Ya-gee-wah goes to her people, on the shores of the Great Lake," she said, calmly.

"Have you been long away from your people?"

"Twenty summers. Like the red stain on the autumn leaf, there was shame on the brow of Ya-gee-wah. She could not bear the scorn of the young braves who once sought her love. She stole away from her people, and lived among the wandering tribes of Louisiana. The pale-face had planted poison in her heart, and she hated and scorned them. No warrior among them all hated the pale-faces as did Ya-gee-wah. No brave sang a wilder war-song around the scalps they sometimes brought in, with long, beautiful locks, like the hair of the maize when it is ripe, than did she. But one day, in the silence of the woods, she heard the whisperings of the Great Spirit, and Ya-gee-wah returns to die," she said, in a tone of stern feeling, and with a lofty air.

"Ya-gee-wah!" he said, with a penetrating glance, "if you tell among the pale-faces that you stole a child from its mother, you will be hunted like a roe and chained in a dark narrow cell. The winds will not blow on you there, or the sunshine or summer rain fall on you."

She shuddered; then, spreading out her arms wide, she waved them like pinions and drew in full inspirations of the keen mountain air; as if the very idea of such a fate had suffocated and oppressed her. He marked the success of the words which told home his blow, and triumphed in his success.

"Listen, Ya-gee-wah—go to the Algonquin hunting-grounds, and in silence be happy. With the first snows of every winter, I will send a canoe laden with provisions, blankets, and calicoes, for your use. I am sorry for the past, and pity you. I would do you good!" he said.

"Can the vulture that preys on the rotten flesh of dead dogs pity the eagle soaring to the sun?" she asked, with a look of withering scorn. "Ya-gee-wah needs not the gifts of the pale-face. If they come, they will feed the watch-fires and dogs of the camp."

"Incarnate devil," he muttered between his teeth. "As you please, Ya-gee-wah," he said aloud; "but remember the cell and

the chains, and be silent as you pass through the settlement of the pale-faces."

"Ya-gee-wah loves the freedom of the woods, as the birds love the air and sunshine. Her heart would burst in chains and darkness—she fears them!" she said, as she glided rapidly past him, up the road he was descending, and reaching a wild crag, that looked as if it were hair-hung over the chasm, stood on it like a Pythoness, while her still statuesque form was delineated against the sky in distinct and graceful lines. She watched Colonel Shirley's receding form until it was lost to view, then, with a bitter laugh, resumed her wearisome journey.

"I might have silenced her forever! One ball sent by my unerring aim into her brain would have insured my safety and success," muttered Colonel Shirley; "but, strange as it may seem, I could not listen to the promptings of the incarnate fiend in the face of such grandeur and splendor as this; where, if there is a God, his hand and smile seem spread over all, like a blessing. And she a woman too!"

CHAPTER XIX.

"It was a dreadful moment; not the tears,
The ling'ring, lasting misery of years,
Could match that minute's anguish—all the worst
Of sorrow's elements, in that dark burst
Broke o'er her soul—"
"With shocks of consciousness, cold, deep, severe,
As when in northern seas, at midnight dark,
An isle of ice encounters some swift bark,
And starting all its wretches from their sleep
By one cold impulse, hurls them in the deep;
So came that shock, not frenzy's self could bear."

VEILED PROPHET.

WHEN Henry De Vere, attended by the congratulations and warm encomiums of friends, and the best wishes of all, left the country on his honorable mission, without seeing Edith, or even sending her a kindly word of farewell or remembrance, her last hope failed, and she yielded to what she considered the inexorable law of her destiny. Henceforth her bright, brief dream must be a forgotten thing. Ere long, the bride of another, the past must be buried beneath a Lethean billow. Since her exciting interview

with Mrs. Lacy, she felt that she had committed a grave error relative to her engagement with Walter Shirley; but she could not retrace her way—her heart fluttered and struggled like a bird entangled in the snare of the fowler—but in vain; there was no way of escape for her—henceforth pride and duty must strengthen for the burthen which a lifetime of atonement would inflict on her. She had but little time now, however, for retrospective thought. Preparations for her bridal and the untiring assiduity of her lover's tender attentions filled up the passing hours; but there were moments when sadness so deep gathered around her—so tearless and terrible—that her soul, filled with forebodings of evil, shrank back chilled and shivering with dismay.

Mrs. Willoughby's thoughts were now brooding forever around her providentially discovered and long-sought treasure, who under Mr. Bedford's care was at Woodreve, whither she frequently went, to spend the calmest, sweetest hours she had known for many a weary year. And while she gradually prepared his mind to bear the great change his position had assumed in the social scale, she could but wonder at the docile humility which, comprehending all, and meekly indifferent to the proud importance it would give him, only so far as it appeared to impart gratification to others, turned away from it as less than nothing in comparison with the consciousness of a mother's love—a blessed rest, where his heart folded its weary wings as in an ark of peace—a home and friends. These were blessings of priceless worth to his gentle spirit. All the loving instincts of his nature had been so long without the sunshine and dews of affection, his way as regards temporal joys had been so desolate and lonely, that now when they came they bloomed under the genial influences shed on them, filling his life with brightness and fragrance, which evermore exhaled its sacredness and sweetness heavenward.

The blight and mildew of hopeless and silent woe, withdrawn from Mrs. Willoughby's mind, she learned from the beautiful purity of her son's life, and all its heavenward tendencies—from the meek rapture of his gratitude to God, and the trusting faith which, sustaining him in adversity, made him joyfully subdued in the sunshine of fortune—how to value, according to its eternal destiny, her immortal soul. Following after, like a pilgrim, it soared close after his, towards brighter and holier visions of hope, and peace, and rest than she had ever known before. The high, proud look, the sternness that made her beautiful features seem like chiselled marble, were softened by these peaceful operations of her soul—the mystical revelations none could tell, but they radiated from the depths of her eyes—they imbued her thoughts, and

modulated to strange sweetness her voice, as if angels guarded and ministered to the world of her inner life.

Mr. Moysa coincided in Mr. Bedford's opinion, that it was more prudent to defer making the fact of the romantic discovery of the heir of Woodreve known, for a short time longer. Even Edith was ignorant of the truth, and thought her step-mother's frequent visits to Woodreve were dictated by the interest she felt in the heart-broken old people at the Cottage Farm, and business connected with her estate. For poor Amy was still lost. Her fate was shrouded in mystery and darkness!

At last the sun arose on the eve of Edith's bridal day. Beside her pillow stood Paula with a *bouquet* of hyacinths, heart's-ease, and orange blossoms, fresh with dew, and in the midst of their fragrant leaves a note from Walter Shirley. After a sleepless night, she had fallen into a deep and refreshing slumber which was filled with dreams of yore. The fantasy still lingered around her heart when she awoke, and, holding out her hand, received the flowers with a faint smile and inhaled their sweetness. They bore her in imagination back to Woodreve again—the dream of her sleep wove its tissue of bright fancies with her waking hours—pleasant memories flitted to and fro around her; she heard the *jubilante excelsis* of the birds, and saw the wild gleaming of the fountains in the sunshine! Disfranchised by the magic spell from the bonds that fettered her, for a moment, she remembered only the glee and beauty of her existence in those lovely haunts; and a smile so joyous and heartfelt gradually parted her lips, that her whole face was lit up with its old radiant expression.

"Those 'ere orange flowers just suit a bride, Miss Etha! They'll look mighty white and pretty in your black hair, miss!" observed Paula, picking up one of the blossoms that had fallen.

"Orange flowers—bride! Did you speak, Paula?" said Edith, starting, aroused all too suddenly from her beautiful vision, and letting the flowers drop as she remembered all.

"Yes, Miss Etha. In course, you'll wear the orange flowers to-morrow, being as how it's all the fashion 'mongst the quality, of *which* you am one. I was a'saying, miss, they'd look mighty handsome in your hair, it's so black. Here's Mr. Shirley's note; won't you read it, Miss Etha?" said Paula, handing it to her.

She took it without a word, and, with a sinking of the heart, which made her almost breathless, tore open the envelop, and read—

"BELOVED EDITH: This day, which brings me to the very threshold of that hour which will make thee mine for aye, has

risen like a harbinger of bliss, bright and serene on the earth. Until this hour, moments of deep sadness have not unfrequently haunted me; doubts of the eventual realization of my fond hopes, and days of suspense and anguish when thine eyes fell more coldly on me than my ardent love could patiently brook. But, beloved! how thrills my being with rapture—how expands my heart with joy, that language cannot express, when I reflect that to-morrow—to-morrow I can fold thee to my bosom, the bride and queen of my affections! Angel guide of my future—flower of my life's desert! what blessing could Heaven bestow of equal worth to me! Heaven itself were not heaven without thee. But time, the great purifier, will prove the deathless devotion of my soul. All its energies, my Edith, subject to thy sweet control, will be strengthened and exalted, until it scales the steep of fame to lay its hard-won trophies at thy feet—but I pause. Every day, hereafter, will speak revelations of my heart to thee, unsealing its every mystery, until thou art mistress of its most secret thoughts—its most sacred emotions! Until then, my Edith, confide in me—trust me, for, if ever a pure love consecrated woman's life, thou art the being thus consecrated. The first flowers of spring I have culled for my bride. May the flowers of happiness which I will strew along her life's pathway be as beautiful, but more enduring!

"Adieu, beloved.

"WALTER."

"To-morrow!" thought Edith, crushing the *billet-doux* in her hand. "Oh God, that to-morrow might never come! Oh, angels of God, how will ye blush as ye record my sinful vows in heaven! Would that I *could* love thee, Walter, as thy true and constant heart deserves! Would that this maddened feeling might pass away from me! Would I were myself again!" She covered her eyes with her hands to exclude the light, which seemed to be burning down into her brain, and the wild, heavy throbbing of her heart moved the fine fabric of her night-dress like a white undulating billow.

"Mus' I put the hy'cinths and all in water, Miss Etha?" asked Paula.

"Yes, if you please, Paula."

"There, now, Miss Etha. Look, I never see such 'squisite *bookets* in all my life. Mr. Walter's man's a great 'mirer of flowers too, and showed me how to put 'em together for fine defect. *Ain't* them lovely, now, Miss Etha?" said Paula, bringing the vase to her, and holding it out with an affected air of elegance. But, as she stood, a large, disgusting-looking worm, which had crept un-

observed from amidst the orange flowers, suddenly fell coiled up on her hand. With a shriek of terror she threw down the vase, which broke into a thousand pieces, scattering the bruised flowers over the floor at her feet, and fell, with distended eyes, panting and gasping, into a chair. Edith started up, much alarmed, and asked her the cause of her agitation. Was she ill?

"I'm so glad it didn't get on you, miss," she at last said, bursting into a flood of tears.

"What was it, Paula?" inquired Edith, gently.

"If anybody, as I was gwine to lead to the halter, was to send me sich a thing, hid up like in flowers, I'd never more see him again. That I never would," she said with passionate energy. "I once heerd our preacher say, the devil oftentimes tuk the shape of a snake, but I didn't bleeve him. Now I do, every word."

"A snake. Good Heavens! Paula, there is not a snake in the room, I hope," exclaimed Edith, really alarmed.

"There it is, Miss Etha. Lord, how it twirls and wriggles, and gives me sick turns! I'm sick," shrieked the sentimental Paula, running towards the door.

"It is only a poor, harmless worm, Paula," said Edith, holding a flower towards it for it to crawl on; then, carrying it gently to the window, stretched out her hand and laid it on a branch of the tree that shaded it. The creature extended itself on the mossy bark as if rejoicing in its rescue, then, creeping higher up, was soon hidden among the tender leaves.

"It's a bad sign, anyhow," muttered Paula at the door, somewhat ashamed of her cowardice. "I'll be bringing up your chocolate, ma'am."

"You are a sluggard, this morning, love," said Mrs. Willoughby, who entered soon after and kissed her with earnest affection; "and sad looks are treasonable on this your bridal eve. Banish them, dear child."

"You told me once, mother," she said in a low tone, "that I would not find the world so happy as Woodreve. You spoke truly."

"My poor Edith, you are jaded by the fatigues of a brilliant season. Nothing so steals away the bloom from heart and cheek as the exactions of the tyrant fashion. I am sorry they have faded your cheeks, and must hope they have not tarnished the freshness of your heart. Experience, dear bought, will be hereafter your silent but constant monitor. You will value the world now according to its true worth. But there is a rainbow amidst the cloud, child. Soon a fondly-cherished bride, you will wander away from the din of life through the magnificent and classic

scenes of Europe; you will regain the vigor and freshness you have wasted, and return to me, Edith, enriched in mind, and exalted in a more refined imagination by associations full of historic romance and sublime poetry. I now wish you joy, beloved child, on the near approach of your nuptials. I know not whom most to congratulate on the occasion, yourself or Walter. Each has found a prize in the other. But I come in to say good-by. I am going to Woodreve, and will not return until evening. There is a night-blooming ceres there which will open to-night. I wish to have it brought in for the inspection of a few friends who have never seen one. Mrs. Lacy will be with you. Good-by until evening."

She kissed her step-mother, and would have given worlds to fall weeping on her bosom and unfold to her her inmost thoughts —her misery. But what could she tell? Confess that, almost at the altar, she hopelessly loved another? No, she would rather die—and that other a De Vere! The bare idea made her cower, and, shuddering, bury her face in her hands.

It was a busy day. Mrs. Lacy, Bessie De Vere, and the eldest Miss Beverly, who had arrived at eleven o'clock, were with her at intervals all day, rallying her mirthfully on her thoughtful silence, as they folded and laid away in the large travelling trunks her costly bridal *trousseau*. On a rose-wood table glittered the nuptial offerings which various friends had sent her, in accordance with the prevailing fashion, which, par courtesy, were supposed to testify the warm and loving regard of the donors for the bride. Some were costly and magnificent. In the midst, gleaming and scintillating in a crimson velvet case, were a set of diamonds and emeralds that had belonged to Walter Shirley's mother, and which he had caused to be re-set for his bride.

At a late hour of the night her friends left her. She was alone. And whichever way she turned her eyes, the sharp rays emanating from those gems, seemed to mock her. She could not bear the impression they produced on her excited imagination, and she removed the lamp to a marble pedestal which stood in an arched niche in a distant part of the room where she usually kept her flowers—there were only a few withered ones on it now. Without an object, she paused before her mirror; but Mrs. Lacy had thrown the rich Mechlin lace veil over it, and through its transparent folds her face was reflected so pale and shadowy that she fled from it, and sank trembling on one of the luxurious chairs. Paula came in a few moments after, with an important air, bringing a long willow basket, which she laid at Edith's feet and began to unfasten.

"This is the bride's dress, miss. Madame Le Roi's gal is just

brung it," she said, taking it carefully out, and holding it admiringly up, a rich shining mass of white satin, and floating, snowy lace. She inspected it with a species of wonder, which for the time sealed her lips.

"Take it away, Paula," said Edith, gently; "I will examine it presently. There—leave me; I wish to be quite alone."

Astonished, beyond expression, how any human being could be so passively indifferent under such an accumulation of splendor, she left the room without replying; more than ever convinced that the "quality" were different from all mankind besides. But an hour had scarcely elapsed, when the door was opened very softly, and she came in on tiptoe, thinking her young mistress was asleep, and laid a letter, which she held in her hand, on the toilet-table, where she loitered awhile, for the purpose of indulging once more her longing admiration of the elegant finery and *bijouterie* scattered over it. A slight movement of Edith's hand interrupted her delightful cogitations, and, afraid that she had disturbed her, she turned reluctantly away and glided noiselessly out. But Edith did not sleep. She was conscious of Paula's coming in, and saw her, through her half-closed eyes, deposit something, she knew not what, on the table. Once or twice afterwards a troubled slumber stole over her overstrained senses; but she dreamed of Harry De Vere, and, starting violently, awoke. It was past midnight when she arose to seek her pillow, and as she was going towards her couch, her eyes fell on the letter Paula had brought in, but she felt unequal to the task of reading it; there was a sensation of inertion and listlessness pervading every faculty and deadening every voluntary effort, and was passing on, but, obeying some uncontrollable impulse, she returned, and, taking it up, broke the seal, and carried it to the light to peruse its contents. Her eyes at first glanced over the strange handwriting, expressionless and cold, then with a frenzied glare ran over and over the words again, as if she wished to, but could not comprehend their meaning, and at last with a wild cry, as if some chord had snapped asunder in her heart, she exclaimed, "Too late! too late!"

She did not faint or rave, or shriek, but leaned heavily on the pedestal, and her cheek grew paler and whiter, while a fearful spell, more awful than the wildest storm that ever filled the human heart, gathered in silence around her. All within and about her seemed to be undergoing a transformation from natural life into something she knew not what. Human feelings and hopes were gliding away from her heart like shivering phantoms, and a twilight mistiness, cold and starless, enveloped it.

"As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prairies,
Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,
So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
Shrinks and closes the heart ere the stroke of doom has attained it."
LONGFELLOW.

And she heard the tramping of hoof-beats as they drew near, but she could not fly them. There was no refuge, no ægis to shelter from the ruthless destiny she had wrought for herself. Darkly and coldly the leaves of earthly happiness folded themselves together and drooped earthward. Heart whispered to brain, and brain echoed back again to heart, the nameless woe, until every nerve was instinct with agony, and every tear-drop frozen.

"It would be pleasant to die now," she murmured, "to lie quietly down, and fall into that deep sleep from which naught can waken or disturb me. Walter says, 'the death sleep is dreamless,'" thought the tempted soul.

It was unlike thee, Harry De Vere, generous and good as thou wert always; it was the first and last selfish act of thy life, to yield to an impulse, all uncontrolled by thy wiser judgment; therefore, like uncle Toby's angel, we will drop a tear to blot out thy sin, as we record it! The letter was from Harry De Vere. When the vessel which was to bear him to a foreign land was fairly out, rolling on the long swell of the ocean, and the pilot was preparing to return, the thought of Edith and his love, so enduring and hopeless, of the great gulf which her marriage with Shirley would open between them, almost maddened him. "I will complete her triumph!" he thought in the bitterness of his feelings. "If she designed to trifle with me, she shall know the wound she has inflicted. She shall not lull herself into the delicious idea that she succeeded in deceiving me, all devoid as I am of worldly polish and intrigue. Before she becomes his bride, perchance after, she shall know I loved her; but, all heartless as she is, she shall feel unworthy of love like mine." Under the influence of these feelings, he dashed off the following lines, sealed the envelop hastily, and thrust it into the pilot's hand, as he was going over the ship's side, with an earnest request that he would deliver it as early as practicable to the person to whom it was directed.

"Lady! Pardon me if now, when my first bright dream of affection is rudely broken, and my future strewed with the wreck, I presume to proffer my wishes and prayers for your happiness. That love, which I was once infatuate enough to think I might win, is another's—may he prize it! Triumph, lady, in your pride and

beauty, and may the reflection that you wantonly lured a heart away by your fascinations, to throw it back again, wounded and stricken, never pain you! May you never need the support of such love as you have scorned! Vain, but true was it—but why recall the bitterness of the past? May you be happy, lady—happy in your choice—happy in your life—is the prayer of

"HENRY DE VERE."

Had it turned her to stone? This avowal of his love on the very threshold of the altar! These taunts—these words of mockery! For so they seemed to her. The proud vacillating will—the divided heart, vibrated keenly beneath the blow. Life henceforth would be a bleaker and more silent waste than earth could show.

When they came in the morning to array her for the bridal, she was very pale, and her hands icy cold. Her eyes looked dull and heavy, while her breath came quick and faint. She received the caresses of Mrs. Willoughby and her friends with a sad unconscious smile, which afterwards they all remembered. And when, like a marble statue veiled, they led her down to the drawing-room where the ceremony was to be performed, and Walter Shirley, elate and confident, gracefully threw his arm around her and kissed her cold cheek, she started, and shuddering lifted her eyes to his with such a wild and sudden glare that those who saw it trembled. But she exhibited no other emotion; his soft whispers fell unheeded on her ear, and passively she allowed him to lead her forward to the spot where stood the minister of religion, calm and solemn, in his sacerdotal robes, waiting to unite them in bonds which might be severed only by death. Like a pure vestal about performing some mystic rite, surrounded by richly-clad neophytes, and silent worshippers, she stood pale and solemn, while the preliminary words of the ceremony were spoken. A breathless silence, broken only by the voice of the priest, brooded over the scene—the seal of destiny was nearly set on their united fate, when a shriek, unearthly, fearful, and thrilling, burst from Edith's lips, and, ere she perjured her soul by the utterance of false vows, she fell back lifeless, and as many thought dead, in Mrs. Willoughby's arms. All was instant confusion. Every effort was resorted to, to recover her, but in vain; and hour after hour she lay, still and motionless, her eyes wide open, but filmed over with a half-transparent mist, and her hands retaining the same position they had assumed at the instant the wild cry burst from her lips, clasped tightly over her heart, and so cold and rigid that it was impossible to remove them, except for an instant or two at a time, when they would slowly resume their original

position. Frantic at the interruption, Walter Shirley exhibited the most uncontrollable grief; he besought the attendant physicians, two old practitioners, to bleed her, to resort to the extremest measures to recover her, if only for a time long enough to allow the ceremony, which would give him the right to watch constantly beside her during her illness, to proceed. But the physicians shook their heads, and were silent. Mrs. Willoughby was profoundly afflicted, and, careless of all else except the welfare of her beloved step-daughter, hung tenderly over her, doing all that her judgment and affection could suggest for her restoration. But all in vain. Nothing seemed to recall, even for a fleeting instant, the slightest vestige of animation, and one after another the dismayed guests departed, to tell how the beautiful bride was death-stricken at the altar.

"In Heaven's name, Dr., tell me, is she dead—have we nothing to hope?" asked Mrs. Willoughby, as the terrible idea became more probable every instant.

"No, madam, she is not dead."

"Well, sir!" asked Walter Shirley, who knelt beside her, gazing with bloodshot eyes on her beautiful face, "if your infernal art can penetrate so far, as you cannot restore her, will you tell us why—what is the cause of her sudden illness?"

"Over-excitement of the nervous system, sir. The poor young lady has been suffering from some mental cause without doubt," he replied.

"And she will soon recover?" he asked eagerly.

"I cannot say. This is the most awful and mysterious form that nervous diseases ever assume," replied the physician.

"What is it?" eagerly asked Mrs. Willoughby and Shirley in the same breath.

"*Catalepsy!*" he briefly answered.

"Great God!" he exclaimed, striking his forehead; "all then is lost!"

"Sometimes," continued the Doctor, "while in this state of apparent lethargy, the *spirituelle* is strangely and morbidly acute. The immortal principle triumphs so completely over matter, and every intellectual perception is so keenly quickened in some cases, that I have known the patient, with a singular power of *clairvoyance*, to relate the minutiæ of incidents and conversation, after his recovery, which occurred in a distant part of the house; things that have not been whispered or hinted at in their presence. But, madam, the poor young lady had better be removed to her own apartment; this state of things may continue longer than we expect."

And in her magnificent bridal robes they conveyed her to her bed. A consultation of physicians, eminent for their skill and judgment, was called, and, during the night and day following, the arcana of medical science seemed to be exhausted in the remedies which were fruitlessly applied. The three, Mrs. Willoughby, Mrs. Lacy, and Shirley, never left her bedside a moment, and if earnest, passionate wishes and prayers could have prevailed, the hue of life would soon have dyed those marble features. Solemn and beautiful, the whiteness of her face only relieved by the raven hair and eyelashes which shaded it, she lay like one who had been brought back by angels from the regions of the SLEEP OF DEATH. That night, at a late hour, Mr. Bedford came from Woodreve; and although Mrs. Willoughby's hasty note, describing the awful event which had interrupted Edith's marriage, had shocked him dreadfully, he was not prepared for the horrors of the reality. As the time had drawn near for her union with Walter Shirley, he showed her unwonted coldness, and for the first time since her childhood, felt estranged from her; her who had been so long the darling and sunshine of his life. Bitterly he reproached himself for it all now, as he gazed, through his tears, on the helpless and silent form before him, and raising his hands with a gesture of mute agony, tottered away from the scene, that in some solitary spot he could give vent to the tribulation of his oppressed heart. He was alone in Mrs. Willoughby's *boudoir*, the large windows of which opened to the floor, revealing beyond a spacious verandah, filled with orange and lemon trees, and some rare plants she had purchased, to transplant to Woodreve. There was a shaded lamp in the room, that scarcely lit it, but the sorrowing old man heeded not the gloom; it accorded with his utter misery too well, and he walked to and fro, to and fro, as if the restless motion ministered some relief to it. Once or twice, he was startled by seeing, as he thought, a white face pressed against the window, then instantly withdrawn; but, believing it was only the reflection of Edith's image presenting itself to his haunted mind and excited nerves, he did not investigate the matter. The door opened, and Mrs. Lacy came softly in, and laid her hand on his arm.

"Mr. Bedford," she said, fixing her earnest eyes on his haggard face, "I must talk with you; there is no one else I can dare tell all I think to, concerning our poor angel Etha."

"What do you think?" he asked quickly, as she paused.

"Come then and sit by me. I will tell you!" she replied.

CHAPTER XX.

"We watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low;
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.
Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied;
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died."

HOOD.

"The world has many cruel points,
Whereby our bosoms have been torn;
And there are dainty themes of grief
In sadness to outlast the morn.
True honor's dearth, affection's death,
Neglectful pride and cankering scorn;
With all the piteous tales, that tears
Have watered since the world was born."

ODE TO MELANCHOLY.

"I AM no sibyl," said Mrs. Lacy after a short silence, "but, as sure as I live, there is a cause for this awful illness of Edith, suspected by no one but myself. When it was too late to retract, she made the discovery that she did not love Walter Shirley as an affianced bride should love the man of her choice."

"I love her, madam, as I love no living thing; but, before God, I'd rather see her coffined to-morrow than know she would recover and become the wife of that man," exclaimed Mr. Bedford, passionately; "he is not worthy of her."

"Yes," observed Mrs. Lacy, emphatically, "better as she is than his wife. Heaven, I believe, has interposed to prevent the sacrifice. I watched him closely from the beginning. You know it is one of my old odd tricks to study countenances. His, with all its vaunted beauty, never pleased me. There is, if you ever observed it, a shifting expression in his eyes, and an unwillingness to look full at you, when conversing with him; and a sardonic sneering curve about the corners of his mouth at times; and withal I never saw a human face possess such a remarkable power of change. I have seen malicious, lowering sneers flit away in an instant before bland, amiable smiles; frequently in the course of an hour. And his sentiments are as base as his features indicate. He professes the old voluptuous creed of Greece, and believes that,

irresponsible to a high and divine power, every instinct should yield to sensual gratifications. This I gleaned from his conversation at various times. He is impure in morals and nature; and has, I think, by the most diabolical, untiring arts, entangled our poor Edith in an engagement which her high-toned principles of honor would not allow her to break."

"You think, then, she did not love him?" inquired Mr. Bedford, with anxious interest.

"No! Charmed and fascinated, like a bird by a brilliant-hued serpent, she may possibly have fancied such a thing at first, but even while under the potent spell, to the very last, *she loved another.* I saw it, marked it in every glance, and the radiant kindling up of every feature whenever *he* came, so different from the languid smile and saddened brow with which she greeted Walter Shirley always. I believe he held her in perfect thrall by his false, arch sentimentalities," said Mrs. Lacy.

"My poor, precious Edith, what a dolt was I not to win her confidence! It might have saved her. Three times she came to me with a troubled, anxious look, as if she wished to impart something that disturbed her; but old fool, doting old fool that I was, I was so vexed at the match, I repulsed her; told her I was busy, and hurried her away by my coldness," cried Mr. Bedford, wringing his hands. "But how, Caroline Lacy, what mean you by saying she loved another? Who was this other?"

"Henry De Vere," quietly replied Mrs. Lacy.

"How do you know? what proof have you?" exclaimed Mr. Bedford, springing up as if an adder had stung him; "tell me, I implore you."

"Thus; I suspected it for months past. I knew *he* loved her. Only love could have transformed Henry De Vere from the lonely, misanthropic scholar—sensitive, morbidly shy, and proud—to a social, pleasant being. It was she, and only she, Edith Willoughby, whose influence wrought the change, who developed the rich treasures of his mental gifts, and shed light over his darkened world. Others, beautiful, fascinating, and skilled in all the art of woman-craft, he scarcely noticed. He always reminded me of the fable of Prometheus, when her eyes and bright smiles greeted him, no matter when, no matter where."

"Your poetic fancies may have exaggerated mere insignificant facts," said Mr. Bedford, shaking his head doubtingly.

"So Edith once told me. But these fancies belong generally to prescient, far seeing instincts, and are ofttimes prophetic. However, I depend not altogether on these. I have proofs of what I assert; proofs which probably might not be considered legal in a

case of law, but which are sufficiently circumstantial in their evidence to convince me of the truth of my suspicions. About an hour ago, Paula came to me with an air of great mystery, and requested to speak with me alone. I accompanied her into another room, and, after a vast amount of circumlocution, she imparted these facts. The night before Edith was to be married, at a very late hour, there came a ring at the hall door, which she, the footman being out, answered. A man like a sailor was standing outside and handed her a letter, which he said was for 'a Miss Willoughby, and must be immediately delivered.' Paula carried it up forthwith, but, thinking that Etha dozed, laid it on the table, and came out immediately, without speaking. The next morning, while they were dressing the bride, who was, I believe firmly, insensible all the while, she found the same letter lying crumpled up and soiled on the floor. She took it up and put it into her pocket. She is positive it is the same, because she examined it by the hall-lamp, before she conveyed it to Edith's chamber, wondering who could have sent such a soiled, coarse-looking letter to her mistress, so unlike the perfumed missives and billets she usually received. Poor Paula, she cried very much while she was telling me, and is firmly impressed with the idea that it is connected in some remote way with her young mistress's illness. Who think you the letter is from?" asked Mrs. Lacy. Mr. Bedford was silent.

"It is from Harry De Vere," continued Mrs. Lacy; "here it is, read it. You will find in it, I think, a confirmation of my poetic fancies. Had not that letter come at the opportune moment it did, Edith would now be the miserable wife of Walter Shirley."

"You are right, Caroline," said Mr. Bedford, after reading it; "I see it all now as plain as noonday. It is all clear. Thank God, there is yet a hope. She may not die; these two children of my heart may be happy yet." He burst into a flood of tears.

"I could not speak to Mrs. Willoughby about it. It was a delicate matter, as she is the aunt of that—that—Shirley. I fear I am very wicked, Mr. Bedford, for I feel as if it would be the greatest relief on earth for me to swear roundly at him—But look—merciful Heaven! look again, Mr. Bedford! did you not see that face against the opposite window?" exclaimed Mrs. Lacy, clinging to his arm.

"I have seen it twice before to-night. It was not my imagination, then, after all," he replied, opening the window and stepping into the verandah. Mrs. Lacy heard a low, smothered cry, and was springing forward to ascertain the cause of the struggle that ensued, when Mr. Bedford appeared, almost dragging in a

slight female figure, whose face was quite hidden by a thick green veil.

"What is your object, unfortunate woman, in prowling about this dwelling at so late an hour? Speak," said Mr. Bedford. But she trembled violently, and remained silent. "Unless you can explain your strange conduct," he continued, "it will be my duty —a painful one, as you are a female—to hand you over to the authorities of the night. You appear under extremely suspicious circumstances. Your silence and confusion but increase the dark aspect of affairs. Can you not speak in extenuation of your conduct?"

"I meant no harm, sir," she said, in a low, plaintive voice. "I only feared she might be dead, and was watching to see if it was so."

"Do you mean Miss Willoughby? What know you of her? What interest can you, a wanderer of the night, feel in one like Miss Willoughby?" he inquired, in a tone of doubt.

"Oh, sir, you are right, quite right. I should not have come," she replied, sobbing convulsively; "but I—Miss Edith—"

Just then Mrs. Willoughby came into the *boudoir* to get a vial of drops she had left in her *escritoire*, and as her eyes fell on the group the woman sprang up and attempted to escape; but Mr. Bedford threw himself before her and baffled the effort. She stood panting like a deer at bay, looking from one to the other, the wild light of her eyes glaring through her veil. "Pray—pray let me go. I'll never return again!" she cried, in a voice of agony.

"What means it all? Who is she? How came she here?" asked Mrs. Willoughby, amazed at the scene. Mr. Bedford told her.

"It is very strange. Will you not tell us who you are who feel so concerned about Miss Willoughby?" asked the lady, gently.

"Oh no, no! You would spurn me. Let me go! I am not fit to breathe the same air. I am a poor, polluted, fallen creature. Pray let me go!" she implored in piteous accents.

"Not fallen so low, poor soul!" cried Mrs. Lacy, springing to her side, "but that repentance can purify you."

"Lady, the angels whispered that to you; but do not touch me. I have strayed away from the fold of human sympathies, forsaken Heaven and virtue, until I hear naught but the curses of God and man ringing in my ears. Oh! it is a dismal sound to hear, ever—ever—evermore," she said, in a voice of utter despondency.

"Poor erring one!" said Mrs. Lacy, brushing away her womanly tears, "despair not. To-morrow, come to me and tell your sad story. I will help to raise you from the gulf into

which human wrongs and human weakness have cast you. You shall not struggle without hope, without aid. Return to peace and virtue. I will lead you thither."

"Peace! lady. Beneath the heavy sods of the graveyard I may find it; not on earth. But I thank you. Your kind words have fallen like balm on my wounded and bruised heart. They may save me from that despair which goads the weak soul into deeper crime. But I cannot come. I would not reward your—your charity, by doing aught to bring down on you the scorn of the world. Its ban is on me."

"With Heaven and mercy on my side, I defy it!" said Mrs. Lacy, with a lofty air. "You must not be lost, when kindness and a willingly extended hand can save you."

"I am lost—lost!" she cried, with a burst of agony. "Let me go—let me leave this. But first tell me, does—she—live?"

"Miss Willoughby lives."

"Thank—no—I am. Lady," she said, suddenly kneeling at Mrs. Willoughby's feet, "I crave one great boon before I depart, never to offend you by my presence again. For the love of humanity, grant it."

"Rise, unfortunate creature! Name your request, and if I can with propriety—for remember you are an unknown, mysterious stranger—I will grant the boon you ask. Would that I could do you some substantial good; but fear I cannot. What is it you wish—money?" asked the lady, deeply touched by her plaintive humility.

"Money! Oh no! Only let me follow you, lady—at a distance—to where she lays. Let me look just one moment—only one—at that fair, perfect face, and—and I'll begone, instantly," she gasped.

"Follow me, then; but be quite still," said Mrs. Willoughby, nodding to Mrs. Lacy and Mr. Bedford to come. The strange woman stood humbly back, holding the skirts of her garments as they passed, lest theirs might perchance brush against them, and, with a slow, faltering step, walked after them. The three physicians who had watched beside Edith during the night had retired to another room to consult, and Walter Shirley, with his arms folded on his breast, stood alone, leaning against the massive post of the bed, while he gazed down, with a stern expression of mingled bitterness and pity, on his stricken bride. When the group entered, the girl did not see him. She was behind the rest; and her eyes, humbly downcast, were not raised until Mrs. Willoughby stepped aside and said—

"There—but do not touch her."

She clasped her attenuated hands together, and knelt, while she gazed on the lovely, motionless face before her; and though her bosom rose and fell with deep emotion, she uttered not even a whispered word. A few minutes elapsed in this silent, woeful watch; then she arose to go away; but her eyes fell on Walter Shirley, who had scarcely observed her yet. She started—faltered—staggered forward a step or two, and, with a heart-rending cry, fell prostrate on the floor. Mrs. Lacy was beside her in an instant, and raising her head the veil fell off, revealing such features as Raphael loved to paint, and golden hair falling back from her round, childish forehead.

"Amy!" exclaimed Mrs. Willoughby, with a burst of tears.

"Amy!" almost shouted Mr. Bedford.

"Amy!" muttered Walter Shirley, grinding his teeth. "What fiend of darkness brought her hither? She shall remember this, by Heaven! the designing Jezebel." He was hurrying away, but Mrs. Willoughby called him to assist in lifting the poor girl to a sofa, little dreaming that it was he who had betrayed and abandoned her. He dared not excuse himself, and as he bore her in his arms to the place designated, and laid her not too tenderly down on the pillows, her consciousness returned. She unclosed her eyes, and when she saw him bending over her, a flush of joy irradiated her face, and, forgetful of where she was, she uttered a wild cry of rapture, and exclaimed, "Have you come back at last, Walter?" But marking his malignant, angry scowl, and the wondering faces around her, she covered her face with her hands and wept bitterly. Again he essayed to leave a scene fraught with disastrous consequences to him if he remained; but Mrs. Willoughby, with every womanly instinct of her noble nature, fully roused, grasped his arm, and gazing into his eyes with a look that penetrated his guilty soul, pointed to the fragile form of the shrinking, trembling Amy Markham, and demanded the truth.

"She is an insane fool; I never saw her before," he declared, while an ashen hue overspread his face.

"Did you ever see Mr. Shirley before, Amy? Answer me truly, as you hope for the forgiveness of Heaven, and your parents, whose hearts are broken in their old age on your account!" said Mrs. Willoughby, in a calm, solemn tone.

"Tell the truth, Amy—you shall be protected, poor child!" said Mr. Bedford.

"Sir, your age protects you," said Walter Shirley, fiercely.

"You may save Edith," whispered Mrs. Lacy.

"But—but—she—is his—wife!" gasped Amy.

"No, Amy. A mysterious Providence interposed to prevent

that," said Mrs. Willoughby, who had overheard her. "Now tell me, without equivocation—did—or did not my nephew, Walter Shirley, lure you away from your home and duty?"

"He did—he did, lady. But for him, I should not be the degraded thing I am," she sobbed.

"Cursed fool!" he muttered. "Madam, this is unkind of you—a strange proceeding—I cannot—!"

"And *you* dared to pollute yonder pure, high heart by seeking companionship with it!" said Mrs. Willoughby, pointing to Edith. "Degraded by the basest of crimes, you presumed to breathe the same atmosphere that was sweetened by her innocent breath—to touch her—to cheat her into a belief that *you* were true and noble in your nature! Look you, Walter, if you were my son, my first born—if my existence depended on yours—I would spurn you for a sin like this—I'd blot you from my heart and love—even as I do now. Here, in the presence of your simple and unfortunate victim—in the presence of yon silent death-like form, shrouded in her bridal robes, who, for aught I know, has been lured against her judgment into a hateful engagement—I command you to leave my sight—return no more! Go! bury your shame in some distant corner of the earth—some lone isle of the sea, where humanity will not be degraded by companionship with one who, like Lucifer, destroyed innocence! As for you, Amy," she continued, "you too have sinned—deeply—sadly sinned, but not so diabolically—so deliberately. You repent. Henceforth my care will be to repair the ruin that a degenerate son of my virtuous race has made." The girl wept. "Must I bid you go again, Walter Shirley? Nay, go not near Edith—even in death your hand must not sully hers by a touch. My will is inflexible."

"This is an artful conspiracy, Aunt Willoughby—most ingeniously contrived for my ruin—" he began, while he glared at Mr. Bedford and Mrs. Lacy.

"No, Walter—it is only a confirmation of my worst fears—fears that, when at times they flashed on my mind terrified me, and were banished as too monstrous to be entertained. Henceforth, all ties of kin are severed between us—we are strangers. Leave me, or I shall be under the necessity of calling up my servants to show you the door," she said, with indignant contempt.

Glaring like a madman around him, he snatched a small pocket-pistol from his breast, and levelled it towards Amy. Mrs. Lacy's quick eye detected the movement—she sprang forward, dashed his arm upwards as he fired, and the ball penetrated the lofty ceiling.

"Villain! it needed only this to convince me of your unprin-

cipled character!" said Mr. Bedford in an excited tone, as Shirley rushed by him, and bounded like a wounded panther down the broad stairway, out of the hall door, and through the silent street towards his hotel, burning with hatred, revenge, and almost maddened at the discovery of his guilt, but breathing not a repentant sigh for the sin itself.

The physicians, on hearing the report of a pistol, which echoed sharply through the silent house, came hastily in, and noticed with astonishment the excited countenance of the group around their patient, but observing, at a glance, that it was not produced by any change in her condition, courteously refrained from asking questions.

"Mr. Shirley made a sudden movement, and a small pocket-pistol he usually carries about him exploded, fortunately without injury to any one," said Mrs. Willoughby, calmly. "Caroline, my dear, conduct Amy into another apartment—soothe her—comfort her as well as you can, and see that she needs nothing. I will remain here until morning. Meanwhile, snatch a half hour's sleep if you can; you need it."

Worn out by fatigue and watching, the physicians went away, after requesting Mrs. Willoughby to notify them immediately if any new symptoms occurred in the condition of their patient; and promised to return, at any rate, by sunrise. And while Mr. Bedford and herself sat together by Edith's side, he imparted to her all that Mrs. Lacy had told him, in a low tone of voice, and showed her the letter from Henry De Vere.

"I have been much to blame in this affair, though unwittingly!" said Mrs. Willoughby, after a long pause. When the French De Vere, as he is usually called, proposed for Edith, and she refused him immediately, and unconditionally, I expressed myself in such unmeasured terms of dislike to the family, and declared in such plain language how displeasing an alliance with them would be to me, that I suppose—you know, how implicitly she ever yielded to my influence—she thought it was hopeless and wrong to encourage, in the slightest degree, a preference for the other. And I remember now, in that very conversation, she involuntarily dropped hints of a secret attachment—but said afterwards it was like a 'dream, passed and forgotten.' Soon after, she accepted my nephew's proposal for her hand. But, had I dreamed the truth, for the sake of her happiness I would have yielded my prejudices, and given my sanction to the match. Oh that my poor Edith had confided in me!" said Mrs. Willoughby, stooping over and kissing the marble forehead of her step-child.

"I believe you, Miriam! It is true, Harry De Vere has not

the accident of high birth to boast of, but I tell you the blood of kings could not enrich his nature, stamped as it is by the noblest attributes that Almighty God ever bestows on his creatures. He will be a crown of glory and honor to the woman who is fortunate enough to win him, and an ornament as well as support to the Republic," said Mr. Bedford, in an energetic whisper.

"The events of to-night have proved more conclusively to me than daily arguments and profound homilies could ever have done, that the circumstances of birth and position are but poor, worthless substitutes for honor, true nobility of soul, and elevated moral purity. My unfortunate nephew, in comparison with this young plebeian, De Vere, is like a fallen angel to a son of light," observed Mrs. Willoughby.

"I never liked him. He was too unnaturally smooth, and too forever on his guard!" said Mr. Bedford, drily. He then explained to her all the circumstances connected with the duel, which showed in strong contrast the bravado of the one and the true magnanimous courage of the other.

"You should have told me this before!" remarked Mrs. Willoughby, whose pale cheeks crimsoned, and were wet with tears, when she learned that Henry De Vere's humanity towards her son was the origin of the quarrel.

"Not I. I fancied somehow that my poor child, Etha, had been cajoled into loving the fellow. You approved of and appeared satisfied with the arrangement—therefore it was none of my business—particularly, Miriam, as my advice was not solicited," he replied, again referring to a point which he was a little sore upon; "but, if I mistake not, we'll hear of more rascality before long."

By this time, the first red beams of morning, tinged with golden light, stole through the half-closed windows. A gentle air breathed amidst the tender leaves, making low music, and Edith's birds, which had been silent two days in the darkened room, burst forth into notes of thrilling sweetness, fluttering against the gilded wires of their cages, and plunging into the limpid water that filled their porcelain, until their glancing wings threw off fairy showers of spray that made the air brighter around them.

"Can it be the red light of morning reflecting on Edith's face?" cried Mrs. Willoughby, who observed a faint flush on the hitherto stainless cheeks, as she stooped, breathless with anxious hope, over her.

Mrs. Lacy, who had just come in a moment previous, also observed it, and much agitated hurried towards the windows, closed the white draperies, then turned to watch, with strained eyes and almost bursting heart, the effect. But no! it was not the reflection

of the rose blush of the morning—it was no illusion—but the gradual unfolding of the almost withered blossoms of life, glowing softly through the chilled, silent veins! Mr. Bedford snatched his hat up, and started off at full speed for the physicians. What thought he, in his impetuous race, of the demure milk-woman and flower-girl on their way to market, that he nearly upset; or the "hot muffin boy," whose basket was unceremoniously plunged by an unlucky jolt of his arm into the gutter; or the litter of pigs that he routed, and sent piping their shrillest notes into the open door of the barber-shop. He heeded none of them, nor paused until he roused, not only the medicos from their brief slumbers, but every family in their respective neighborhoods, who took for granted that nothing less than the advent of twins could cause such a prodigious sensation at that early hour. In less than a quarter of an hour he had the satisfaction of ushering all three of the physicians into Edith's chamber. Professionally they were deeply interested in the case; but their sympathies and humane feelings were profoundly excited, owing to the youth and beauty of the patient, and the extraordinary circumstances attendant on it. They went through the formula of feeling her wrists, and trying the muscles of the arms, by moving them to and fro, to ascertain whether there was a normal relaxation; but they could discover no decided improvement in her state, except that which the appearance of life in her cheeks promised. After a patient investigation of the symptoms and interchange of opinions, during which time Mrs. Willoughby and the rest scarcely removed their eyes from Edith, the senior practitioner observed:—

"It is the opinion of my associates and myself that a crisis of an important character is at hand. As every remedial agent which could be applied to the *physique* has been tested without success, it is more evident to us from that fact that this must have been superinduced by *mental* causes, which severely overtaxed and shocked the nerves. Therefore, madam, we advise that, if you know of anything that would be likely to produce an exalted emotion of pleasure in the patient, supposing she were in a normal state, to impart it to her without delay. As I observed once before, relative to this disease, sometimes in this awful and mysterious state, when every function of life seems paralyzed, the *spirituelle* is most keenly perceptive."

"I have learned something within the last few hours," observed Mrs. Willoughby in a low voice, "which may produce the desired effect, if she is not beyond the verge of hope." The doctor took a seat beside the pale-stricken girl, and pressed his fingers on her wrist. Mrs. Willoughby, agitated by her fears and hopes, knelt

by the pillow and leaning over her, said, in her clearest and most musical tones, rich with emotion and slightly tremulous: "Be happy, Edith! you are delivered! Henry De Vere's heart is yours, Edith, my child! He will return ere long—you will be his bride!" Every eye was moist with tears, and not a breath was heard. Minute after minute elapsed, but no change was apparent; they were about turning away, hopeless and despairing, when the heavily fringed eyelids, which had not moved for long, weary hours, slowly drooped, then closed; and a sigh, as if the stirring of the stagnant waters of life had produced great agony, burst from her lips. Mrs. Willoughby's head fell forward beside Edith's. Mr. Bedford and Mrs. Lacy were pressing towards her, in great agitation, when the physician waved them back with his hand, and, laying his finger on his lip, intimated the most profound silence. Mrs. Willoughby, only overcome by strong emotion, raised her head, and, clasping her hands, continued kneeling, and watched with intense anxiety for the slightest change.

At intervals a slight faint gasp announced the struggling breath floating through its cells; then the breast heaved as the heart's mighty levers moved; and two great tears forced their way from beneath the raven lashes, and fell like broken pearls amidst the rich meshes of the bridal veil.

"Thank God—all is or soon will be right!" observed the attentive physician in a low-toned voice, and with an upward glance of gratitude. "Administer a few drops of *eau de vie* every ten minutes, madam; and let every impression and association around her be pleasant, but tranquil. A musical box somewhere in the room—you say she is passionately fond of music—flowers—the songs of those golden fellows chanting so blithely in their cages, will have a happy effect; but for the sake of humanity don't talk or whisper around her." His directions were punctually obeyed. Mrs. Willoughby would not yield her place to any one beside Edith's pillow, feeling that she was the indirect cause of her suffering; and must atone for it by extraordinary acts of love. And Edith lived. All Mr. Bedford's love had returned with tenfold strength, sanctified and softened by affliction. No mother with her first born could have tended her with more watchful affection than did he. Day and night, scarcely snatching necessary repose, he hovered around her; for days and days passed wearily on, and she lay consuming away beneath the depressing influence of a low grade of nervous fever, speaking no word, and scarcely noticing any object. But his vigils were untiring. He smoothed her pillow, bathed her hands with balsamic waters, and administered the prescribed medicinal draughts. Every greenhouse was ex-

plored for her favorite flowers, and every delicacy that gold could procure was brought to tempt her appetite; and at last their prayers, their tenderness and care were rewarded by a slow, but certain convalescence, and they bore her in triumph back to Woodreve, a faded and fragile image of the radiantly beautiful Edith Willoughby, who left it full of hope and buoyant spirits six months before.

Nothing could prevail on Amy to return to the home of her early and sinless girlhood. She felt that she had brought too heavy a woe on it by her sin to cross its threshold again. Nor would she see her old parents. "She wished them," she told Mrs. Willoughby, "to remember her as one dead. She was not worthy of being called 'child,' or claiming her old place beside the hearth. Let them think of me as having died, but died repentant." But thankfully she accepted an opportunity that presented itself, through Mrs. Willoughby's exertions, of retiring to a Magdalen asylum, under the superintendence and personal care of a community of saintly women, whose care it is to lead the erring and wandering back to repentance and virtue. There, beneath the shadow of the cross, meek emblem of mercy to all, the humble Magdalen daily knelt, imploring grace and comfort from that august source from whence proceeded the divine oracle, "Go in peace, and sin no more. Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Every effort that his subtle ingenuity could invent was resorted to by Walter Shirley to obtain an interview with his aunt; but all in vain. Letter after letter, written as only he could write, expressive of the most humble contrition for his faults, was sent, and returned unopened. He had quieted his creditors by averring, "on his honor, (?) that only the illness of Miss Willoughby delayed his marriage. As soon as she recovered, it would take place, and their claims should be promptly met." But it happened that Mr. Moysa was one to whom he was largely indebted for sums of money borrowed at various times, and the shrewd business man suspected that all was going wrong, from having observed Mrs. Willoughby pass him by one day, at his door, without noticing his salutation, although he was confident she must have observed him. "I'll talk to Mr. Bedford about this," he said; and without losing time sought an interview with him. Mrs. Willoughby happened to be there, and received him, as she always did, with cordial and friendly courtesy; but he felt a delicacy in opening the object of his business in her presence, and would have left without referring to it, but for some observation made by Mr. Bedford relative to the improvement in Edith's health, which led to it.

"The air of Woodreve has revived her very much. She begins to walk about among her flowers; once or twice she has touched the piano; but she is very sad at times," said Mrs. Willoughby.

"It was a heavy blow to Mr. Shirley, madam," said Mr. Moysa, plunging at once into the matter. "I never saw so melancholy a change in any one, I think. But now that Miss Willoughby is recovering, I presume he may still look forward to a realization of his happiness?"

"Not as the husband of my step-daughter, Mr. Moysa; that is quite at an end," said Mrs. Willoughby, decidedly.

"Well, madam, as affairs assume this aspect, which I half suspected to be the case, I must congratulate you that it is so," said Mr. Moysa, bowing. "Before I had the honor of knowing you, I was so unfortunate as to advance Mr. Shirley some thousands on the strength of his early marriage with the richest heiress in the State, the money to be repaid from the bride's fortune. My faith in his assertions was not so firm as to prevent my making certain inquiries relative to the affair, and I received answers which confirmed them; so that I no longer hesitated. I believe I am not the only one who will suffer."

Mrs. Willoughby was dreadfully shocked; but, after some moments' reflection, observed: "I will not allow you, Mr. Moysa, to suffer loss in this matter, and I empower you now to offer this degraded young man one single alternative to arrest and exposure. If he will leave the country, under a solemn promise to return no more while he lives, I will cancel this debt, if it takes half my fortune. If not, sir, you must resort at once to legal measures to obtain what is due you."

"He'll go," said Mr. Bedford, drily.

"I would"—continued Mrs. Willoughby, with a quivering lip—"it were in my power to discharge *all* claims against him; those that are honest, and those which were established in fraud; but fear that even my fortune could not stand it."

"I am deeply indebted to you, madam," replied Mr. Moysa; "but, as you are not legally responsible for Mr. Shirley's debts, I do not see how I can impose on your generosity by accepting your offer."

"See here, Moysa," said Mr. Bedford, rubbing his hands together, "you must let Mrs. Willoughby have her own way, sir. There is a large private debt owing to you, you know, on the score of that boy of hers."

"Exactly," interrupted Mrs. Willoughby.

"Let *me* talk, Miriam," continued Mr. Bedford. "An opportunity now presents itself for her to serve your interests; and I

must say, Moysa, if you don't let her do it, you will not behave handsomely. As to the responsibility she assumes in this case, it is voluntary; therefore, neither she nor you will be doing injustice to the creditors of this scapegrace, as *she is not legally responsible for his liabilities.*"

"A second Solomon come to judgment," exclaimed the excellent Jew, laughing.

"I hope, earnestly, you will accept of my proposition, Mr. Moysa," said Mrs. Willoughby.

"I will, madam. I could not refuse it, even if my interests did not urge me to accept it," he replied, frankly.

"Well, let me hear from you as soon as the affair is settled. I will drive to the office of my man of business, and give him the necessary instructions to negotiate with you; then, afterwards, come to Woodreve for a holiday. Promise me to come and be my guest, at least for a week," said Mrs. Willoughby, going.

"Thanks, madam," he replied, bowing low. "Your wishes are commands to-day. The bare idea of seeing Ishmael wandering like an angel of the olden time among those ancient woods would lure me away from the dull routine of business, if naught else could."

"That Jew is of the tribe of Jesse, I'd swear," said Mr. Bedford as he handed Mrs. Willoughby into her carriage. He was so delighted with the whole thing, the *denouement* was so decidedly satisfactory to him thus far, that he did not precisely understand his own meaning when he paid Mr. Moysa the magnificent compliment; and if he had been put on his oath as to who Jesse was, he could only have sworn "he was his abstract idea of a good old Jew, of whom he had heard once or twice in his life."

CHAPTER XXI.

"Feeling is deep and still, and the word that floats on the surface
Is as the tossing buoy that betrays where the anchor is hidden."
LONGFELLOW.

As when billows of gold heave up from the west, sending out on the measureless shores of heaven bright undulations of crimson, and fleecy spray tinted with sapphire—when the earth mists brighten into glory, and ruined tower and blasted tree gleam with strange beauty—when flower and wave fill the air with dreamy

odors and music, and the human heart with immortal gifts of thought and song; so had life presented to Edith Willoughby, through the glittering veil of promise, a blending of all that is beautiful and bright. And her faith, so strong in the truth of that vision, gave a dazzling sense of reality to the enchantment. But the twilight had stolen on; it had deepened around her, and she had learned how vain a thing it is to let the heart wander out after shadows—idyls with no light of their own; borrowing their all of glitterance from a source whose most brilliant smiles are the bitterest of mockeries, so swiftly do they fade.

And oh, how sad is this twilight of the heart, this brooding over memories of shadows, which we thought were angels!

But, blessed be the comforter when the shadows are lost in gloom, and night in silence and majesty floats softly and gradually over the earth, watering it with tears of refreshment. The pained eyes and heart, like the drooping blossoms, lift themselves upwards and behold "those worlds of light that are not seen by day"—upwards where all is calm; where no glare drives back earthward the dazzled eyes; where no bewildering hues weary the soul's pinion by their ceaseless changes, when it would fain ascend higher, higher towards the portals of God, where, like ladders of gems, glow the stars, and, like a great beacon in the midst of all, lambent and holy, smiles the moon to illuminate the upward way. Soul, thought, and imagination—thought, imagination, and soul, the triune leader of life—scale the purple starlit heights, until the murmur of earth sounds like the melting of distant waves on a sandy shore, and the heart is hushed to listen to strange whisperings—whisperings of the wind floating among flaming spheres, like angel fingers over harp-strings of gold, making low music, which lulls all emotion into sweet repose. And this night fades not into darkness and gloom. Oh no! There is no cheatery, no illusion, no wild disappointment in this starlit night of the heart; it ends, but it ends in a dawn which brightens with the rolling hours; it melts away, is lost; but lost in sunny pavilions which look into heaven. Thus had it been with Edith. The ideal glory of her dream of life had been chilled and darkened; the twilight was awful and lonely. Those to whom she was dearest had seen with dismay the sudden decadence; they had watched her agonies; hung over her with words of anguish when they deemed her insensible to every sound, to every emotion; but they saw not, nor knew aught beyond the veil of silence that wrapped her; it was only the body that had been transformed for a little while into marble. She knew all, felt all, remembered and heard all amidst the solemn silence of her ice-bound life; and if the shock was full

of dark woe and startling fears, there was a star of consolation glimmering through the shadowy vista that saved her from despair, and made her thankful. From the phantom of Walter Shirley's love she was delivered; from the utterance of false vows her soul had been preserved by strange events, in which her mind acknowledged the care of Heaven, and though she felt that Henry De Vere would never return to claim a heart which he evidently believed had trifled with, and scorned his, the thought that such a noble being had loved her was pleasant and elevating, and it strengthened her in the perfection of every excellence which she had learned to value in him. Of the past, she communed with none. Both Mrs. Willoughby and Mr. Bedford felt that it would be transgressing the bounds of their position to allude to the subject, unless encouraged by herself; but she had never, since her recovery, referred in the remotest sense to anything connected with it. They would like to have known all she had felt and suffered, that they might pour the sweet balm of sympathy over the wounds so cruelly inflicted; they hoped, from day to day, to hear her unravel the mysteries of that deathlike trance into which she had been plunged; they wished she might speak of Henry De Vere, that all might be explained and forgiven wherein they had erred towards her; but, when weeks and weeks, then months glided on, and her lips were still sealed, when they saw the roses, a shade paler than of yore, blooming on her cheeks, and marked the calm smile that shed its lustre over her lovely features, while her daily life exhibited a chastened spirit, and a peace which flowed from supernal sources, they tried to feel content; Edith's character was purified. A sudden reverse of fortune, an unexpected deprivation of wealth, affluence, and splendor, are not the true tests by which to judge a woman's character. Her heroism and energy may be proved thereby; but it is the *heart trial*, the blow which disappoints, humbles, lacerates, nay, almost crushes the sensitive chords of life in the wild conflict, that affords the ordeal by which the genuine greatness of her soul is established. If it soften her nature instead of embittering it, and opens her sympathies more to the wants and woes of others; if in the joys and blessings of other human hearts she can unselfishly rejoice, and, forgetful of her own pangs, perform the social duties which brighten up the dim ways of life; if she weeps her few tears alone, that they may not turn the sweet fountain of home joys into bitter waters; if she can hide beneath an active benevolence the sorrow that will prey at times like a ferocious beast on her vitals, then is her triumph high, holy, complete. Such are fitter for heaven, fitter to dwell on earth. Faith, grace, constancy, fortitude, crowned by the peace

of heaven, are the influences that surround them, and like ivy on whose leaves the sun's rays rest, while the vine clings in verdant beauty to some ruined shrine, they impart such a holy charm to suffering, they throw such a tranquil lustre around desolation, that it no longer appals and terrifies the shrinking heart, but imbues it with fresh courage for life's conflict. If Edith's life was a sadder, it was a better one. The thoughts which once flew like wild birds on restless wing over the world, the fancies which scarcely knew any occupation but building castles of sunshine and air, and twisting ropes of sand, were now gathered home, chastened and subdued by realities which led them to their true destination.

She participated with a sincerely unselfish heart in the new glow of happiness that was shed around the roof-tree by the recovery of the heir of Woodreve—the changed countenance and heartfelt smiles of her step-mother—the brooding peace that the assurance of having found her long-lost child imparted to a life which had heretofore been so proud and lonely in its sufferings, were pleasant themes for Edith to dwell on, and her mind reflected generously back every emotion of gratification they afforded. To the eventful story of Arthur Vernon she listened with wonder and interest, and his life, sinless and heavenward in its calm routine of duty, presented to her contemplation a high and holy example. The very *patois* of his language imparted to him a singular charm, while his refined and gifted mind, his enthusiastic love for music and painting, and, above all, his earnest yet gentle gratitude for the affection that was lavished on him, his perfect features, which were never brightened by glee or laughter, but ever wore a look of thought, that sometimes dawned into smiles that had but little of earth in them, drew her away perpetually from the haunting dream of her own broken hopes.

Arthur Vernon had passed through the twilight, with none but angels to cheer him; he had wandered through the night, and they had led him along to peace on earth, while Faith, yearning for her child, held open the portals of heaven, and beckoned him thitherward to the morning without end. Edith noted the signs, as they dawned in the kindling eyes and feverish cheeks; she saw, though none else marked it, the gradual falling off of the earth-garb, and the soft unfolding of the spirit-wings that were to bear him to the better land. Such companionship suited her well. If Edith's refined nature enjoyed in a higher degree than common the luxury of feeling, she was no sentimentalist. She felt a genuine rapture in imparting pleasure to others, and in alleviating distress, which enabled her to carry out the practical good of her intentions without an effort. Much of her time and care was devoted to the two

broken-hearted old people at the Farm. Daily did she ride over to inquire after their welfare, and perform various kind offices for the now ailing dame Markham, which required a more tender hand than a menial's. She read aloud to her from the pages of consoling books which had been penned by those who had "gone up through much tribulation" to rest where storm and tempest come not, and sometimes sang, in her own clear musical voice, as she sat beside the arm-chair, the beautiful words of a hymn which she knew well would not only melt the bitter rime away from that mother's failing heart, but make it think more forgivingly of the erring Magdalen.

"I would not live alway, thus fettered by sin;
Temptation without, and corruption within;
E'en the rapture of pardon is mingled with fears,
And the cup of thanksgiving with penitent tears."

And in bringing home to her this idea of human weakness and corruption, so different in its grades, but so universal in its nature, she opened to the suffering mind the holiest precept in the law of charity, which demands of us to "do unto others as we would they should do unto us;" and images of her last-born and best beloved, the pride of her age, the sunlight of their home, mingled with confused visions of a pale outcast, want-stricken and degraded, perhaps repenting, flitted in constant succession through her mind; but it was only in the silently falling tear, the uplifted eyes, and at last the calm that settled on those rigid, careworn features, that Edith knew her mission of peace was nearly accomplished; and the hope brightened within her that she would ere long hear her say: "Bring back my stray lamb—she is forgiven!"

Feverish, brief, and fitful had Edith found the raptures of earth; serene and holy, the bloom of immortal and divine hopes. But moments of human weakness came; and sometimes, amidst the dewy silence of the gloaming, when every sound of life was hushed into deep repose at Woodreve, the music of harp-notes stole out on the air, accompanied by a voice rich, low, and inexpressibly sad, singing—

"Joys we have tasted
May sometimes return,
But the lamp, when once wasted,
Ah! how can it burn?
Splendors now clouded,
Say when will ye shine?
Broke is the goblet,
And wasted the wine.

"Many the changes
Since last we met;
Pleasures have brightened,
And tears have been wept;
Friends have been scattered
Like roses in bloom;
Some at the bridal,
And some at the tomb."*

And the family that usually met at this hour in Mrs. Willoughby's library, would pause in their low-toned converse to listen; knowing well that the pangs of the past were floating like shadows around her heart; but they could say naught, do naught on a subject so tacitly forbidden. "Words of endearment would they have spoken, where words of consolation availed not," had they dared; but it could not be, and in the twilight they often shed silent tears over the griefs of the beloved one—griefs which they had never seen wring a single drop from the eyes of her who endured them. Edith's beauty and lovely character, independent of her position and fortune, had won her lovers who would have deemed themselves richly blessed in her affection, either of which would have been agreeable in every point of view to her friends, who fondly hoped she would eventually triumph so far over the recollection of broken hopes and blighted love as to seek a worthy companionship for her noble heart, and its tender affinities, in a happy union with one who would not only appreciate, but almost worship her. But they knew her not yet. With true womanly constancy she clung to the pure memory of her first love; she felt that it was impossible to admit the image of another into the sanctuary of her heart, while *his* still haunted it—the shrine was strewed with ashes; the earth-light, which hope had lit up within it, was dim and flickering; but it might not, even with its dying beams, shine on the advent of another love. She declined both offers with due feeling and courtesy.

One morning in September, when the air was laden with fragrance, and every vine quivered in the soft winds that scattered earthward their frail, sweet blossoms, the family at Woodreve were grouped around a table in Mrs. Willoughby's library, to hear the conclusion of an exquisite poem just issued from the press. It was by Longfellow, that lofty spirit of song, whose writings have elicited, even from Carlyle, the great cynic and THINKER of the age, the distinction of being called *the* poet of America. And so he is, since Willis has forgotten the Judean hills, the rapt themes of old, and the solemn whisperings of the stars, and wrapped an

* Mrs. Norton.

ephemeral drapery of affectation around himself, which we wish from our heart of hearts the sun or wind would deprive him of, and let us have TWO POETS instead of one. We have ventured this, at the risk of being pronounced a *twaddler* by this Beau Brummell of literature; but, if he will write one single poem to equal "The Leper," or any other of his early efforts, we will pardon the affront right willingly.

The poem was Evangeline. Arthur Vernon had commenced it the day previous; and there was a something in the tissue of the story which bore so close an affinity to the touching tale of his early wanderings—there were so many sentiments that reminded him of certain sad passages in his life, that he read it with a deep pathos that added a perfect charm to the poetry. He had now come to the part where Evangeline's friends remonstrate with her on wasting her youth in hopelessly waiting for the return of Gabriel, her first and only love. They tell her she is all too fair to be "left to braid St. Catherine's tresses."

"Then would Evangeline answer serenely, but sadly: 'I cannot—
Whither my heart has gone there follows my hand, and not elsewhere;
For when the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illumines the pathway,
Many things are made clear, that else lie hidden in darkness.'
And thereupon the priest—her friend and father confessor—
Said, with a smile, 'O daughter, thy God thus speaketh within thee:
Talk not of wasted affection—affection never was wasted;
If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning
Back to their springs, like rain, shall fill them full of refreshment;
That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain.
Patience! accomplish thy labor of love, till the heart is made god-like,
Purified, strengthened, perfected, and rendered more worthy of heaven.'"

A smile, lustrous and beautifully sad, beamed over Edith's countenance, and tears trembled in her eyes as she timidly glanced on the faces around her.

"Is it thus with thee, Edith, my daughter?" asked Mrs. Willoughby.

"Even so, my mother, my friends! This is all that I have been longing to say, many, many days. Henceforth, my ways, my sentiments, will have no mystery in them; all is made clear by the poet," she replied, without lifting her eyes. There was a moment's silence. Mrs. Willoughby leaned over and kissed her forehead tenderly; and Mr. Bedford, moving his seat nearer to her, whispered, "I have been no Father Felician to thee, child."

"Read on, dear Arthur," she said, after chiding the old man's self-reproaches with a smile and caress. After this, it became brighter at Woodreve.

"Mother," the word most beautiful in English, said Arthur Vernon one evening, not long after this, as he raised his eyes from a drawing he was working on, and fixed them fondly on Mrs. Willoughby, who sat near him reading; "my mother, look at this gateway for Sancta Maria Magdalena. It is finished." Since Amy found a refuge at the "Magdalen," Mrs. Willoughby had ample opportunity afforded her for observing the admirable arrangements and charitable utility of the institution, while the sublime spirit of benevolence that pervaded its minutest regulations commanded her veneration. There she saw poor, o'ertempted souls, who, having forfeited their claims to virtuous companionship by sinning once, and scared away from repentance by the awful sneers and frowns of the world; cast off from every tie of consanguinity, and their penitent tears derided and scorned by those who were sunk low in infamy, find a safe sanctuary, where heavenly Pity washed away with her tears the dust and blood from their wandering feet. There, saved and repentant, she saw their lives pass away in acts of humiliation and patience, forgetting the world and forgotten; but well content that it should be so, since human kindness and eternal hope had rescued them from the doom of the despairing, and led them on, beneath the shadow of the cross, to the rest of the weary. The saintly women, in whose hearts the love of God had wrought a miracle of love for these world-scorned wanderers, felt even on earth a foretaste of their eternal reward, as they led the despised and erring ones back to virtue and heaven. Patiently and unwearied they toiled, these "Daughters of the Good Shepherd," forgetful of former luxuries, high estate, and gentle birth, in their voluntary abnegation of worldly advantages; enduring, with meek forgiveness, all the contumely that might be cast on their heroic and divinely charitable mission, and daily strengthening their souls in the example of Him who came on earth to give rest to the weary, and call the erring to repentance. Mrs. Willoughby noted all this with a discerning eye, and, anxious to contribute to so worthy an object, she settled a liberal annuity on the asylum, and had given her artist son the general idea of a design she wished him to execute, of a spacious marble gateway she intended erecting at her own cost, in front of the now dingy court which led to it.

"It is not right. You do not like it, my mother," he observed, construing her silence into disapprobation of his work. "I will make another."

"You must not retouch or alter a line, Arthur. It is beautiful. It is inspired not only by genius, but religion. There is only one

thing to regret, and that scarcely amounts to a regret. I would have preferred Gothic arches," she replied, enthusiastically.

"Ah, mother! in *bella Italia* we love not the gloomy Gothic arch. It is too cold; it is like the catacombs. But I can make it, if you wish."

"No. The Saracenic is a graceful and elegant style. In this model you have thrown its happiest features together. It must not be changed. There, over the entrance, just within that pointed niche, I will have placed a large painting of the benign Saviour in the act of pardoning the Magdalen who watered HIS feet with her tears, and the words, 'Thy sins which are many are forgiven thee,' inscribed under it in letters of gold. A transparent screen of glass shall protect it from the weather; behind it, at night, a lamp shall be kept burning, that the hopeless and erring may see it, as they wander homeless and friendless through the midnight hours, and perchance be led, by the divine pity it illustrates, into the shelter of safety it invites them to. Through the darkness it shall shine like a beacon amidst the storm. From the stagnant graves beneath the river, from thoughts of the deadly poison-drop, it shall lure their trembling souls to works of virtuous humiliation and penitence," said Mrs. Willoughby, while her face kindled up with lofty emotions.

"And these, my mother?" asked Arthur Vernon, regarding her with an angelic smile, while his finger rested on a vacant niche which the light and elegant turret on each side of the gateway exhibited.

"Take up your pencil, boy, and I will describe the designs I wish you to sketch for two groups in marble; one for each of those niches," she replied. "A guardian angel lifting with one hand a female form from the earth, whose dishevelled hair half veils a countenance where despair and repentance struggle together; while with the other he points towards the pitying face of the divine Saviour. There, you have caught the idea perfectly: it will do. Now, Arthur, draw me the same female figure, calm and meek, her eyes cast down humbly, and her hands folded on her breast, in the act of walking up a narrow, perilous steep, attended by the same spirit-guide, whose wings almost enfold her. Aha! that outline is full of harmony—so.—This shall occupy the niche on the other side. These groups shall also be protected by a shade of glass, and, at night, lit up with lamps. Now, my son, surmounting all, sketch a massive cross, for it was through the cross that man first learned the divine science of forgiveness."

"Where will these marble angels be sculptured, mother?" asked Arthur Vernon in Italian, as he laid down his pencils.

"In Florence or Rome. In both places sojourn eminent Ame-

rican sculptors, whose genius bids fair to rival the masters of old. Thither we will go," she replied, smiling.

"To Italy?" he cried, with a glow of rapture on his countenance. "Shall we, indeed, my mother, go to *bella Italia?*"

"Ere long, Arthur, we will go. The bland air and picturesque glories, the poetry, the sunlight of Italy will give you strength. Much fear I that your delicate frame is failing. Methinks you grow more feeble of late," said the mother with tearful eyes.

"No. I feel quite well. I am only too happy. It oppresses me, my mother," he replied, as he threw himself on a cushioned *lounge* which stood near the open window. There was no pallor on his cheeks to tell a tale of exhaustion or decay, or too close application to his favorite pursuits. They glowed beneath the shining waves of his hair like summer roses, and his large blue eyes beamed with unwonted brightness as they softly closed in slumber, their last glances resting lovingly on her. Whence, then, her fears? His dreams were happy. One could tell that from the gently heaving breath and serene smile that at intervals flitted over his angelic countenance. Softly, tenderly, she lifted the sunny hair from his temples and threw it back, that the perfumed winds might kiss his face; then unfastened the small diamond button that confined his collar, and bared his white throat, that looked like faultlessly carved marble, to the coolness of evening. His hand hung over the side of the lounge, and the blue veins seemed starting through the smooth ivory skin. She raised it up and laid it on her knee, and, folding her own lightly over it, kept a vigil of love. "How beautiful!" she murmured. "How nobly, yet how innocently lovely is my child! Lord God! I deserve not thy exceeding love in restoring him to me, while I was all forgetful of thee." Mr. Bedford had entered the library unperceived by Mrs. Willoughby, nor was she aware of his presence until he stood by her side. He had heard the fervent aspiration of her grateful heart, and said, in a low whisper, pointing to the slumberer,

"No doubt, then, ever crosses your mind, Miriam?"

"Doubt!" she replied, quickly. "Do I doubt I have a heart, when I feel its constant pulsations? I would not dare doubt he is mine."

"So, so! There is one thing—but you have such faith in it all, why should I fear?" said Mr. Bedford, hesitatingly.

Just at that moment a muffled female form suddenly appeared at the open window;—the next, she was kneeling at Mrs. Willoughby's feet, where, with trembling eagerness, she deposited a small bundle, wrapped in curiously embroidered skins. There was

just light enough to discover that her face was swarthy and her frame wasted, as with clasped hands she turned her glittering eyes imploringly from Mrs. Willoughby to Mr. Bedford, evidently incapable, from illness or some strong emotion, to speak, then nodded her head towards the sleeping Vernon and smiled, until her small white teeth shone with a ghastly expression. Fearful of awakening him, and amazed at the Indian woman's sudden appearance and strange pantomime, Mrs. Willoughby sat perfectly motionless; while Mr. Bedford, although he could not comprehend her meaning, knew from her gestures that her designs were not evil, and thought, perchance, she was a suppliant for some favor, and awaited the result, but determined to watch every movement, in the event of her not being such as he thought her. Her whole frame trembled excessively, and several times she made vain efforts to speak. "You are ill and in want, poor woman," said Mrs. Willoughby, kindly.

"The—breath—of—the Great Spirit—has blown—back—the—magnolia—leaf—to—its—mother's breast—at last," she gasped out, pointing with her long attenuated finger to Vernon. "Many—many—moons—ago—the SUN-CLOUD—stole it—away—but—the—Great Spirit—was—about him—like—the—breath—of the—wild—honeysuckle—around—the flower.—Ya-gee-wah—heard in—the—deep—silence—of the—forest—the—whisper—of—the—Great Spirit—He—told—her—all—all!" Both Mrs. Willoughby and Mr. Bedford instantly remembered the story told by some trappers soon after the heir of Woodreve was stolen, of an Indian girl they had met, travelling westward with a fair-haired child on her bosom, and felt assured that Providence, in His inscrutable wisdom, was about unfolding the mystery, and establishing the most certain link in the chain of evidence regarding Vernon's identity; they exchanged glances, and Mrs. Willoughby placed her son's hand softly on the pillow where he reclined, as she arose from the chair beside him, and said, "Come with me into another room; come, tell me all you know—nay, you shall not be harmed—come!"

"Perhaps," observed Mr. Bedford, "it would be better, Miriam, to wait until to-morrow; the woman is evidently ill, and needs rest."

"To-morrow!" she gasped, while a peculiar smile flitted over her face; "to-morrow!" Then she crouched along the floor until she was close by the side of Arthur Vernon, and with trembling hands was in the act of opening the fine linen folds that covered his chest; but Mrs. Willoughby, fearing she intended some harm, leaned over, and silently and quickly grasped them in her own

ere she accomplished her purpose, but started at their icy coldness; she would have relaxed her hold, but the Indian woman passively submitted to the restraint, and, raising her wan, sharp-featured face to hers, said in a faint, gasping voice, "Listen to—the—tongue—that never lied. Once—a pale-faced—woman—found—Ya-gee-wah—sick—alone—forsaken—on a wolf-track—in the forest; she pitied—the daughter—of—the—chief—because—her people—left—her—there—to die." She paused a few moments; her head fell forward on her breast, and a violent shivering convulsed her frame, like a sudden blast when it rushes through the boughs of a forest tree; but it passed away, and, making almost a superhuman effort, she regained her strength, and continued. "She—led—Ya-gee-wah—away—to—the—Jesuit—mission—where—they—told—her—wonderful—things—of the Great Spirit—His son—and—their Holy Ghost*—and—they—taught her—the sign—of—their faith.—But Ya-gee-wah—loved the woods—she left—the—Jesuit missions—and after—the—leaves—had twice—fallen—the Sun-cloud—was the—Sun-cloud—no more.—She—was like—the—wild bird—that—the hunter—brings—down—with—his arrow—the—sign of—the Jesuit missions—and the—wounded bird—are—there—there—there! Ya-gee-wah—made—them—them—made—them—there—there!" she gasped; then, snatching her hands away from the lady's relaxed fingers, and gently lifting the linen from the boy's chest, she saw the marks, that long years before she had indelibly impressed on the smooth, pure skin of the infant she had stolen. A cry of triumph burst from her whitening lips, and, springing to her feet, she stood like a sibyl before Mrs. Willoughby, her long gray hair streaming in elf-locks over her face, and her emaciated bosom heaving as wildly as if death were tugging at every heart-chord. "He is thine!" she shrieked; "the—lips—that lie not—tell thee—he—is thine. These—these," she cried, pointing to the bundle she had laid at Mrs. Willoughby's feet when she first entered, "these—Ya-gee-wah—stripped—them—off—the pale papoose—because he was—cold in the—midnight forests. She wrapped—him—in furs. There—strip off—the wampum—they are—all—there."

"Merciful God!" exclaimed Mrs. Willoughby, almost overcome, "how I thank thee! But—why—why—did you steal away my child? I never harmed ye!"

"Ask him—him—from—whose mother's—womb ye both came

* The way the Christian tribes beyond the Rocky Mountains speak of the HOLY TRINITY.

—whose—mother's paps—ye—both—drew—the—stream—of life—he—can—tell—ye."

"Not my brother—my own brother!" exclaimed Mrs. Willoughby.

"Jasper Shirley! before high Heaven I always thought he knew more of the matter than any one else!" said Mr. Bedford.

"Ay—ask—him! He—wanted—thine—inheritance!" she shrieked, falling heavily to the floor. They thought her dead; but again upheaved the billow of life from her stern and broken heart, and a low bitter laugh rang out from her lips; then an ashy hue overspread her face, and the gleam of her eyes was shadowed over by a misty film. In broken accents, she murmured softly the words of a prayer she had learned at the Jesuit mission; her breathing became more gentle, and, turning her face towards Mrs. Willoughby, she whispered, "Forgive!"

"Truly art thou forgiven!" replied the lady, as she knelt over the dying daughter of the forest, while her warm tears fell and mingled with the icy death-dews that beaded her forehead.

"Ya-gee-wah hears—the whistle of the blue-bird. The leaves rustle—in—the—winds;—the wild-dove—broods—on her nest—among—the dogwood blossoms," she whispered, while a smile settled on the finely-moulded lineaments of her face, softening away the harsh impressions of care and injury. The Algonquin woman forgot her wrongs for a moment, as the Lethean billows of death laved her feet, and pleasant memories threw an instant's sunshine around her freezing heart. "The waves of—the—great lake—laugh in—the light—of the Great Spirit's eye—and the shadow—of the—woods—hangs like a cloud on—the sunny tide. —Ha!—where is the—birchen canoe? Where—is—the sunshine? Ya-gee-wah shivers—the snows fall—ugh!—ugh! Ha!" she said, turning her sightless eyes from side to side. "A warrior—is going—on the—wings of the—wind—with the setting sun—to the happy hunting-grounds—of the West. Ya-gee-wah hears—the death-song—in the—hushed evening. What victim—bring in the Pawnee Loups. Ha! ha! tie him to the stake—pile—high the fagot—torture—tear—pierce his false heart with arrows—there—Ya-gee-wah is avenged! Ya-gee-wah is ——" and with these words of triumph, uttered in a piercing tone, her injured spirit went forth on its wild, dark errand to eternity. Arthur Vernon, startled from his deep slumbers by her shrieks, looked with a wondering glance on the group; but, awed into silence by the terrible aspect of the dying woman, his mother's tears, and the solemn expression of Mr. Bedford's face, who leaned over them—the effect of all much heightened by the shadowy gloom

that pervaded the room—he spoke not nor moved; but every moment increased the curious interest he felt in a scene so new and startling. Mrs. Willoughby soon discovered that he was awake, and explained, in brief but touching language, what had at first appeared to him so mysterious. Then he remembered the dreamy thoughts that had haunted him for years, of a dark forest, and eyes so black and glittering that seemed never to wink or sleep, but to watch him evermore, until he floated on the ocean billows, a frail waif, abandoned to the tender mercies of ruthless humanity. It was all clear now, but the memory oppressed him; and, lifting his mother's hand to his lips, he knelt a moment beside the motionless body of the Indian woman, and, pressing his small crucifix to her marble lips, and then reverently to his own, in token of perfect forgiveness, his lips moved as if in prayer, and in silence he arose, and glided from the library.

The next morning they consigned all that was mortal of the wronged Ya-gee-wah to the bosom of her mother earth. Far down in the Woodreve forest, where the winds, the birds, and the sound of the rushing waves made wild music together, they made her grave; and although the hands that laid her in the mould, and the hearts that sent forth a tear to hallow her memory, were those she had most wounded, all was done as lovingly and kindly for the hapless wanderer as if she had, by a lifetime of service, had strong demands on their gratitude.

"What became of the parcel, Miriam?" inquired Mr. Bedford, a day or two after.

"Here it is," replied Mrs. Willoughby, rising, and unlocking a drawer where it was deposited. "This shawl was my mother's. The evening my child was missing, I had thrown it over him, fearing the night air would give him cold; and here are the little shoes, the rich dress it was my fancy to array him in; here they all are, somewhat discolored by time, but uninjured. Every proof is convincing. There is nothing wanting now to establish his claims as my son."

"Nothing," replied Mr. Bedford, in a positive tone. "I remember this shawl well. It *was* your mother's. Her father had it worked to order, in Cashmere, for a bridal gift, when he anticipated her marriage with myself. See you not the Nesselrode crest, worked in crimson and gold, in the corner of every palm-leaf?"

"I do not think I ever observed it before. But this shawl is a relic of strangely-mingled memories. Relic of my grandsire's pride—relic of my gentle mother, of my child, of my sufferings, and, last of all, the perfidy of my own kin, and the tragic death of the victim of his avarice and passion," said Mrs. Willoughby.

"I have come to the conclusion, Miriam, that I am growing old, and more stupid than old. Why did I treat Etha as I did? Why did I influence Henry De Vere to fly off in a tangent to Belgium? And, last of all, why have I so long hesitated to believe fully in the fact of Massoletti and Arthur Vernon being one and the same? Merely because I am a stupid old woodcock," said Mr. Bedford, peevishly.

"*You were not a mother*," said Mrs. Willoughby, smiling.

"Pshaw! Where's Arthur? I want him."

"With Edith in the music-room. Don't you hear them singing?"

"Pshaw!" repeated Mr. Bedford. "Music, and painting, and praying! The boy'll be good for naught—a perfect Jesse Jonquil. He shall read law."

Mrs. Willoughby laughed at the Herculean idea of difficulty the effort presented of making a lawyer of a genius, but did not interdict it, knowing full well how it would end; and Mr. Bedford flounced out to seek his neophyte, but was so enraptured with the melody of their exquisitely tuneful voices, chanting, in solemn strains, one of Beethoven's cathedral hymns, that he sat down in a state of happy forgetfulness to listen. The demon idea was charmed away from his heart, nor ever returned.

CHAPTER XXII.

LETTER FROM BESSIE AUBRY TO HER BROTHER HENRY DE VERE.

"What a time since I wrote!—I'm a sad, naughty girl,
For though, like a tee-totum, I'm all in a whirl,
Yet e'en as you wittily say, a tee-totum,
Between all its twirls, gives a *letter* to note 'em!"

"Oh, what do you think, after all my romancing,
My visions of glory—my sighing, my glancing,
This colonel—I scarce can commit it to paper—
This colonel's no more than a vile linen-draper;
My brain's in a fever, my pulses beat quick,
I shall die—or at least be exceedingly sick."

FUDGE'S LETTERS FROM PARIS.

IF your diplomatic talents, my dearest Henry, equal your assurance, you will undoubtedly become a second Metternich. From this smart beginning, you anticipate a scolding, doubtless,

nor am I in the least humor to disappoint you, be assured. To receive so brief an answer to a letter that cost me three days of "piled-up agonies" to write, which you conclude with the very modest request for me "to reply immediately, and give you a detailed account of everything that has occurred since the date of my last," is an affront which I am not likely to recover from very soon. Not a word of continental gossip—not a foreign *on dit*—not a syllable about King Leopold, or the gracious queen—the court, or the fashions, in return for my effort extraordinary. You are the very strangest mortal, if mortal you be, that ever lived. *I* should have gone off into the most delectable ecstasies over a letter so crammed with news as mine. I thought my pathetic description of the wedding, which turned out after all to be no wedding, would move you to tears and eloquence, and in case *that* failed to interest you, I certainly counted on my well told narrative of Mrs. Willoughby's romantic discovery of her son, who by the by was a *protéyé* of yours. But *you*, touched by the ordinary affairs of mortals, indeed! I wonder now at my ever entertaining so preposterous an idea. If I had written you word that some sooty engineer had discovered, by practical observation, something of novel utility in the art of mechanism, you would have favored me with an essay as long as my arm—but fie upon you, Harry! I who would be a perfect Biddy Fudge, if I could once set my foot on European soil—or at home either, if I had the least encouragement, to have my talents so completely put down! Well! you will have to answer to literature, if it is never enriched by my efforts! Mind! I throw the whole responsibility on you! I hope you will not feel the least complimented by my prompt compliance with your arbitrary request, for, on my honor, if I were not absolutely bursting with news, which I *must* tell somebody—and everybody here knows it—you should not have a scrip of my pen. Regard this letter, then, my affectionate brother, as a kind of safety-valve. There! that *safety-valve* idea has interested you, I could swear—so I'll begin.

Miss Cicely Thorne is married, but not to Aubry's cousin Wyche! She is wedded to an old, gouty ex-Congressman. She met him incidentally on one of her begging excursions, in the parlor of a fashionable hotel, and on a hint that he was single, rich, and gouty, she blandly introduced herself, with a prescription in the name of humanity of course. He first fancied the prescription did him good, and wanting a good nurse, and having a remote idea that Miss Cicely was necessary to his comfort, he proposed, and was accepted, after his physician had assured her the disease was rapidly progressing towards his stomach. Of

course she is now compelled to forego her never-ending charitable excursions and incursions, and is quite devoted to her husband's toes and her future interests. You can't imagine what a relief it is to society, his taking her for "better, for worse." Had I my way, I'd vote him a civic crown. The next wedding that made a sensation was my own! The wedding, my dear Harry, was commonplace enough. Aubry and I loved each other, and met with not the least obstacle to our happiness, to give it a zest, which you must own was very stupid. I had an elegant and fashionable *trousseau*—the diamonds which you sent, according to promise, from that delightful *belle* Paris, came safely to hand—my bridal dress and veil were *magnifique*—I had orange blossoms and all that sort of thing, and a very crowded party after the ceremony, which was witnessed only by the family and a few intimates. By the by, I might as well mention here that the ex-envoy who returned home on account of his health, and whose diplomatic office you were sent out to fill, is dead. He forwarded me the diamonds per express from New York—the next day I read his obituary in the "Herald."

People expected me to be sentimental when I was married; but I could not coax a single tear from my eyes, which was very provoking, because it is quite the fashion, let me tell you! Aubry tried to look dignified, but forgot all about it after a while, and rattled and laughed and went on as usual. But the funniest thing happened during the evening, which put an end to the festivities, which I regretted, because I must say that I never saw people enjoy themselves so heartily under our ultra-fashionable roof as they did that night; but this *en passant*. You know that Alice, poor thing! was engaged to Col. Forsyth—the military sprig of English nobility, whom Fred introduced to us some months ago. They wished and expected to be married the same evening we were, and mamma wished it too, because she fancied it would give the whole affair more interesting *éclat*, but pa remonstrated and objected in his usual tame way, until, finding *that* had no effect, he stormed and swore, "By Rats," it should not be until he was fully satisfied that Col. Forsyth's claims to the position and pretensions he assumed were true. Mamma was furious—Alice fainted—and pa buttoned up his coat, banged his hat down over his eyes, and marched off, looking as determined as human being could look. You know I never liked Forsyth, and although I felt sorry for Alice, I could not help thinking that pa had acted just as a prudent parent *should* act in such a momentous affair. Now I will describe the event that threw us all into such ridiculous consternation at the close of my bridal evening. Of

course Col. Forsyth was present, looking grand and silent as the sphinx, having eyes and ears for no one but Alice, who really appeared to wonderful advantage in satin and blonde, ensconced as usual among the crimson velvet cushions of her favorite *lounge*. Aubry had mentioned in the morning that he expected a friend from New York to be present at our nuptials; hoped he would come, and all that; but with his usual carelessness forgot to mention his name, which, I confess, I forgot to ask. But twelve o'clock struck, and, as he did not appear, I concluded that something had occurred to detain him, which afterwards proved to be the fact, and did not afterwards give him a passing thought. It was nearly one o'clock, I suppose, when one of the footmen handed Aubry a card. He instantly left the room, whispering, as he passed me, that his friend had arrived. I will describe the *tableau* at the moment. You remember that Alice's lounge stands in the arched recess near the large double window in the front drawing-room, the said window being ornamented by four—eight—twelve immense panes of rose-colored glass—mamma's especial pride and glory. Alice, with the languid air of a beautiful sultana, reclined on her cushions. I, as bride, was of course the centre of the "goodlie companie," who crowded around me wherever I moved. The bustle and throng affected Alice's nerves, and Col. Forsyth was in the act of handing her an ice when Aubry entered with his friend, a quiet, gentlemanly-looking personage, in a handsome military undress uniform, and was just presenting him to me, when Col. Forsyth happened to turn his eyes, and see him. He started, the ice fell over Alice's face; then with one bound he sprang through the window, shivering every pane in his exit, and vanished to regions unknown. What a hubbub! what a scene ensued, it would be impossible for *you* to imagine, for, my dearest Harry, you have not imagination enough to form the slightest conception of it. The shrieks of Alice, who went off in the most outrageous hysterics—the rage of mamma—the panic and confusion that seized all, baffle description. The only idea that presented itself to *me*, to the exclusion of every other, was that the unfortunate man had been seized with hydrophobia, and I asked Alice "if he had bitten her," but she renewed her screams so violently that they were compelled to remove her to her own apartment. Amidst it all, I observed that Aubry's friend was the only calm, self-possessed person present, and when the din had somewhat subsided, he apologized in the handsomest manner to the company for "the uproar he had so unintentionally caused at so interesting a time. He would not for the world have shown himself that evening, could he have foreseen the con-

sequences, but must say that now he felt called on, by a duty, which he considered imperative, to explain whatever seemed mysterious in the affair, as the *denouement* had occurred so unexpectedly and publicly. He could have wished, for the sake of the respected parties concerned, a more private explanation, but there was no alternative left." Here Aubry introduced him as *Colonel* Forsyth of the British army. The announcement of his name gave every one an inhaling of the truth of the case. "The person," he then went on to say, "who made so undignified an exit a few minutes ago, I am ashamed to say, *was* formerly my *valet*. On my way to the United States, via Canada, I was suddenly prostrated by extreme illness in Montreal, where I was robbed of my papers and letters of credit by the ungrateful fellow, who had been in my service some five or six years, and whose family were retainers of my father's, living on his estate with extraordinary privileges, owing altogether to his having been born in the same hour I myself saw the light, and his mother being appointed to nurse me, my own mother being too delicate to afford me the sweet cares of maternity. As my foster-brother, he was educated with more than ordinary care; although he was too dull to improve his advantages, but, associating constantly with the gentlemen's sons of the neighborhood and myself, in our sports, he acquired a certain ease and mannerism which will easily account for his successful *début* in genteel society. As his delinquency only exposed me to a little inconvenience, I determined not to pursue the matter by prosecution or otherwise, until, some few weeks ago, I received a letter from Mr. Aubry, inquiring 'if I had a relative of the same name and rank in the British army as myself'—in short, desiring all the information I could give of such an individual; as a 'Col. Forsyth had introduced himself into the best society in the country, and was seeking an alliance with a lovely member of a highly respectable American family; the marriage being only postponed until his statements could be corroborated.' I felt a presentiment of the truth, but, fearing I might be mistaken, was exceedingly cautious in my reply, and informed my friend Mr. Aubry, to whom I am proud to acknowledge myself under deep obligations for his kind attention and assistance during my illness at Montreal, where he providentially was when I was taken, 'that I would see him in a few days, when it would be in my power to give him a more decided and satisfactory answer after I had seen the Colonel Forsyth referred to.' This was followed by an invitation to his nuptials with one of the loveliest daughters of America." Here was a handsome and well-turned compliment to me, and such a graceful bow—I declare, Harry, that, although I never

was considered *much* of a beauty, I felt amazingly like one then. "We were detained to-night," he went on, "by an accident that happened to some part of the machinery of the steam-boat, an hour or two beyond the usual time of her arrival. If my coming has caused a pang, and brought distress into this respected family, I regret the necessary infliction, the disappointment, and all that is disagreeable, connected with it; but beyond this, believe me, it is better even thus than to have been irrevocably duped by a low, base adventurer. Like the surgeon's probe, it may be hard to bear at the moment, but, if it prevent ruin and disgrace, as well as misery, it is all well, it is more than well, it is a Providence which should be blessed, even while it frowns."

"Sir," said pa, going up and offering his hand, "a *father* blesses it and you! Come forward, Mrs. De Vere, and thank the deliverer of your daughter." Mamma made a very stiff acknowledgment, I assure you, for she was dreadfully mortified at the result of her manœuvring to marry her pet daughter to the scion of a noble family. And the supposed fact of his being the scion of a noble stock was his only recommendation—for a duller, more stupid, awkward person I never met. As to me, when the excitement was over, and the people all gone, I thought of the ludicrous appearance of the *quasi* colonel through the crashing window, until I thought I must die with laughter. It was dreadful, but for the life of me I could not help it, and right glad was I when the last guest departed, for then I yielded to the inextinguishable laughter that half smothered me. I was decent enough, however, to keep away from mamma and Alice—and Aubry *had* the grace to commence scolding me, but ended by laughing more immoderately than did I. The real Simon Pure, Colonel Glendower Forsyth, the second son of Lord Glendower, as the British consul informed pa, is our frequent guest; and what will please you with him is, that he has become much attached to pa, which mamma considers very strange. Alice has quite recovered from her disappointment; in fact, my dear Harry, it has given her such a rousing up that you would scarcely recognize her for the same person; but no one dares, yet awhile, to mention her flying lover to her. We refrain from the slightest allusion to him, to save her feelings, for she was horribly cut by the affair; however, I expect ere long she will herself make a jest of the last act of the drama. Alice is becoming more sensible, I think, every day; she is more cheerful, and is fonder of my society. She reads French novels yet; but of a different class from those she has been in the habit of poring over; indeed, I was quite electrified, the other day, to hear her break out in a spirited philippic against George Sands, Paul de

Kock, and Sue—once the idols of her imagination. Colonel Forsyth begins to loiter beside her, and seems to take great pleasure in directing her ideas and tastes; he walks with her, drives with her, and occasionally they sing together—Alice, you know, has a sweet voice—and has attended her to two concerts—all of which makes mamma very gracious, while pa looks on with quiet satisfaction at the evident course events are taking. The next event, my dear Harry, was this. Aubry, having no near relations to oppose it, sold his Southern estates, and offered his slaves their freedom, on condition that they emigrated to Liberia, where he would provide amply for them during one year. Many acceded to his noble proposition, but the rest chose to remain in his service. After consulting with pa, and your old friend, Mr. Bedford, he invested his funds in mercantile affairs; which having no practical knowledge of himself, he took into partnership Mr. Charles Lacy, whose intimate acquaintance with such concerns, and highly honorable character, Aubry and the rest consider capital sufficient to entitle him to a full partnership. Pa says they are getting on famously. Another wedding followed mine, productive of stranger events still. And can you imagine who the parties are? Not if you guessed a thousand times, so I'll tell you, and try to describe the events that ensued in real bookish fashion. Fred got dreadfully involved with his debts of honor; he must have gambled enormously; and ended by forging pa's name on a note for some thirty or forty thousand dollars; then ran off to France with Sophy Tresham, after being married by a magistrate somewhere in town. Pa was enraged beyond anything I ever saw, not so much at the loss of the money, as by the ingratitude, the wickedness, and duplicity of his *first-born*. It was a horrid act. All our united entreaties failed to persuade him to avoid an exposure of the disgraceful act; but what he refused us was granted to the mute eloquence of mamma's woe—her pale, dejected countenance—her indifference to all around her—her heartwrung groans during a weary night of agony, and a certain humility, which seemed to express a consciousness of having brought—but no! I dare not raise *my* voice reproachfully against her—prevailed, and pa acknowledged the draft. If mamma had attempted to brave it out, no human power could have prevented an exposure—but she was truly broken-hearted. Of course, my dear Harry, we *all* feel deeply pained at poor Fred's dereliction—it was a dreadful transaction—I know it will affect *you* keenly. There was no earthly apology for the act—neither want, poverty, nor dire necessities drove him to the desperate alternative; it was the effect of a misguided mind—*idleness*—evil associations—and a depraved

mind. May he repent! Mrs. Tresham, a quiet, sensible woman, blamed Cicely Thorne—so does mamma—for the whole thing, but hopes that the bitter lesson, which she knows her daughter will be compelled to experience, will be productive of ultimate good to her. She declares, however, that she will hold no communication with them until a thorough reformation begins; in that case, she will support and countenance them, and aid them in every way in their moral progress. I'm afraid, though, it's a forlorn hope. Mamma sighs very often, my dear Harry, then speaks of you in terms of affection and pride, wishes for your return, and seems to comprehend all at once the whole of your excellent character. She will not allow us to mention Fred's name where she is; indeed, we feel no disposition to speak of him at any time. Ere long, mamma had another great trial. For some weeks past, pa has been insisting on our leaving Chiswicke Square for a more quiet part of the town, where our old homestead is located. But this mamma most determinately opposed; but I saw that, eventually, he would carry his point. I must tell you that pa don't take things as meekly as he used to; he has defined his position in the family, and, I must own, we all respect him the more for it. Somehow we have become great friends, and, indeed, my dear Harry, I am only surprised at my long estrangement from him, for certainly he has the very best heart in the world. At last the subject of removal was dropped, as we thought entirely; but no such thing! it was renewed in a way quite astounding to us all, and productive of an instant compliance on mamma's part with pa's wishes.

One morning we were all together in the drawing-room, conversing about various matters, when pa very unexpectedly entered, accompanied by a sun-burnt sea-faring man, apparently a few years older than himself, whom he introduced by the most uncommon and ridiculous name of *Dobbler*—Captain Dobbler! Mamma drew herself up, Alice unscrewed the gold stopper of her smelling-bottle, and I waited with some curiosity for the result. The man sat down, and, placing his glazed hat between his knees, took out an immense Madras handkerchief and wiped his face; then deliberately opened a little square black box, crammed with tobacco, picked therefrom a quid, which he stuffed with the greatest nonchalance into his cheek. I glanced around, and could scarcely forbear shrieking with laughter at the looks I saw. It is my besetting sin, dear Harry, this keen sense of the ridiculous, and I cannot help it; however, on this occasion, I suppressed a giggle as well as I could, and holding a book over the lower part of my face, looked as demure as possible, for I saw from pa's countenance that something portentous was lowering.

"Mr. De Vere," observed mamma, impatiently, "will you have refreshments set out in the dining-room for your guest?"

"Not at all. I be'n't a bit hungry," interposed Captain Dobbler. "I never sailed into a strange port yet for purvisions when my own ship's locker was full."

"What does he mean, De Vere?" asked mamma, highly offended by his familiarity.

"No offence, marm; no offence. I only wanted you to understand that you've missed stays *in*tirely," he observed.

"You are taking unusual liberties, sir, with me. You are, however, quite mistaken. I am a perfect stranger to that article of dress. I wish you to understand I never saw a pair of stays. De Vere, I beg that you will inform me what this man's business is," exclaimed mamma, reddening up, for you know she can't bear the least allusion to the means she resorts to to conceal her exuberance of flesh.

"Listen, Peggy, and I'll tell thee," said my father, gravely. "There are none present now but our own flesh and blood, and I'll tell thee; not to pain thee, wife, or wound or mortify thee, but in the hope that it will lead thee back, with thy old husband, to scenes of early content and peace. Thou dost remember well our early days. Thou wert a dependent, Peggy, when I first knew thee, on an honest, kind-hearted old woman named Jeanette, who is now in the county almshouse. Had she not taken thee, *it* would have been *thy* home, wife. Thou dost remember that then I was a poor calker lad in the shipyard, known to my employers and associates as 'honest Jack Divers,' thank God; and how I fell in love with thy bright eyes, Peggy, and persuaded thee to run off with me and get married? I was poor, wife, very poor then. But, presently, gold began to pour in. The poor calker lad became a rich merchant. Thou dost remember?"

At first, mamma's indignation threatened to interrupt him in no gentle manner. Twice she made an effort to rise, for the purpose of leaving the room; but pa laid his hand on her arm, and, looking her full in the face, her eyes quailed, then filled with tears, and with a hysteric sob she leaned back on the cushions of her chair. There was a short silence, which was interrupted by mamma, who, pointing to the stranger, asked, "Why is *he* here? Take him away."

"No, Peggy, that may not be. Anon, wife, anon I will tell thee all. Thou hadst a father, Peggy; and a sister, many years older than thyself. Mayhap thou dost not remember either; for they went westward, leaving thee, quite a little child, in the care of thy uncle's wife. That uncle was a sailor, and I remember

him well. He went away, soon after, on a whaling voyage. He was gone three long years, and when he got back his wife was dead. When she died, old Janet, the woman I spoke of before, out of pure charity, took thee, fed thee, clothed thee, and protected thee from harm, until thou didst forsake her for the calker lad. When thy uncle, the sailor, came back from the perils of the sea, and found only a grave where he expected to find a living, loving wife, he fled again, roved off to foreign parts, and naught was heard from him until news came that his ship had been wrecked, and all had perished in the deep sea. Not long after, thy father and sister came wandering back from the wilds of the West, he a poverty-stricken, broken-hearted old man; she a widowed woman, weighed down by hardships and premature age. They sought thee in vain. None could tell them whither we had gone. So, wife, for years the widowed daughter eked out a poor living for them both by her needle. At last thy father began to dote. He lost the recollection of everything save thee, wife—the young child, so unaccountably lost to him—his little Maggie."

"Ha! My God! De Vere! Why torture me with such fabrications? Here, Bessie, help me to my room," said mamma, in great agitation.

"Presently, Peggy; presently, wife. By and by, when the widow's heart was wellnigh broken with her struggles, and the doting old man tottering over his grave, in the very weakness of poverty and age, and no hope was left to them but the hope of heaven, the sailor whom we all thought dead suddenly appeared, sent, doubtless, by the Lord God for their consolation. That is he—Will Dobbler—thy uncle—"

"*That* man? That coarse, vulgar person? I will not believe it," cried mamma, passionately.

"We have proof, Peggy, natural and legal proof of the fact, else he would not be here now. Besides, dost thou remember a Mrs. Hewlitt, who was employed in the winter to make up some useless articles of finery for our daughters?—how thou didst pinch, and screw, and contend, to wrest a few cents from her honest labor? Methinks so. Thou didst also see, Peggy, a decrepit old man wandering about her poor home. These were thy father and sister."

"It is a vile fabrication to extort money. I don't believe it. You are all leagued against me—husband, children, and all. Such low relations as you have described I will never acknowledge. Never! Never! Even if an angel came down from heaven to confirm all you say," shrieked mamma.

"We are honest folk, madam; no need to be ashamed," said Captain Dobbler.

"Give them money, De Vere, and be rid of them. I could not survive such a connection being known," exclaimed mamma.

"Money!" cried the sailor, rising in high indignation, and almost putting the fire out by a copious jet of tobacco juice, which he sent from his lips in the most astonishing way. "Money! Not while Will Dobbler's livin'; he didn't go to the Injies to come back a beggar, by crackee. There be some things in this world as has hearts, a ship amongst 'em; but there be others as has gizzards only, by dad. Money! The devil!" Here, my dear Harry, I must record another smothered laugh.

"What *will* the world say?" screamed mamma, wringing her hands. "I shall die—I am suffocating."

"With pride, and passion, and unnatural feelings, Peggy. So much for all that thy idol, the *world*, has taught thee. But I tell thee now, once for all, thou must break either with it or me. It has had my gray head and foolish old heart under its harrow long enough, 'by rats,' and I'll bear it no longer. If thou art unnatural enough to be ashamed of thy own kith and kin, *I* am not. Here, Will Dobbler—my hand on it, man, adopt *me*. I'm proud to belong to ye! Peggy, wife, I am in earnest now. This day, I rented this house to a celebrated manufacturer of quack medicines; next week, we retire to the old homestead. If it pleases thee to go with us, well; if not, thou canst go to thy profligate son; and Heaven support thee, woman, when the *world* knows all, as it *shall* know, by rats. Thou hast pinned thy soul and salvation, I verily believe, on its fiat; may it prove no broken reed to thee!"

"I have not time, dear Harry, to tell you anything more of this remarkable interview. In my next I may, perchance, spin it out to its full extent. Suffice it to say that pa gained his point, as I predicted; and mamma has been with him to see her sister and father; but the poor old man was breathing his last when she got there, and did not know who she was. She was quite surprised to find them handsomely fixed, and surrounded not only by comforts, but luxuries, in a beautiful *cottage ornée*, which is situated on a picturesque hill a few miles out, and commands a fine view of the bay and shipping. Of course she became more reconciled immediately to the necessity of the thing, and behaved with more cordiality to my aunt Rachel than might have been expected from her previous repugnance to acknowledge the connection.

And we are so delightfully situated in the old homestead, Harry. The broad old-fashioned hall, with spacious parlors, and chambers

on each side, the easy winding stairs, the delightful flower-garden at the side, with the sundial in the midst—do you remember it, Hal?—are perfectly charming. Then the drapery in the rear. It is filled with the most luscious-looking clusters of white and purple grapes you ever beheld. Oh, I wish you were with us!

Mamma goes a great deal to church now, and is accused by her fashionable friends of being a devotee; at any rate, it is the only way they can account for our removal from Chiswicke Square. At first they stood off amazingly; but, as soon as it was ascertained that pa had *not* failed, as was suspected by the world, they resumed their old way. As Mrs. Aubry, I assure you, I *might* be quite the fashion, but I am really *so* happy, dear Hal, and everything is so much more *genuine* and cheerful than it was formerly, and we are so united among ourselves, that, except the society of a few intelligent and beloved *friends*, Mrs. Tresham among the number, I have lost all relish for the commonplace "five hundred," and the various *fashionalities* I used to *try* so hard to enjoy. We even have our meals now at sensible hours, and, my dearest Harry, for the first time within my recollection, pa sits at the foot of his own table; he really eats with us, and drinks his flagon of ale every day, without even a passing frown from mamma. That ale, however, is in barbarous taste, it is so horribly bitter; I wish from my heart he'd take sherry or port. Captain Dobbler, *our* uncle Will—he *is* our uncle beyond doubt—often dines with us on Sundays. Mamma's sister comes but seldom. We all regret it, for she is such a quiet, patient, loving soul, that we have become truly attached to her. But now I shall be compelled to stop. Aubry has just come in, and is amusing himself by teasing me in an infinity of ways to make me lay aside my writing, to listen to some ridiculous story he's come home with about his cousin Wyche. I had almost forgotten to ask you the meaning of a report which has reached us of some romantic affair you've had with an opera dancer; and if it is true that you are in high favor with the daughter of a Baron—somebody—I can't think of these Dutch names for my life. Be sure and tell me the truth when you write. Mrs. Willoughby, her son Arthur Vernon, and Miss Willoughby sailed last week for Europe. Possibly you may see them; but I do not know what their summer route will be; I only know they will winter in southern Europe, for the benefit of young Vernon's health, which is extremely delicate. Everybody's love to yourself, and my respectful homage to the king and queen, whom I am dying to see. Consider yourself courtseyed to, and kissed by your ever affectionate sister,

BESSIE AUBRY.

P. S.—In glancing over my letter, dear Hal, I perceive I have left you in a mist about one thing, which, being an integral part of my narrative, should not be omitted. But you must know that Aubry came in just at the moment I intended to explain to you, in regular order, how papa and Captain Dobbler found each other out, and rattled so much droll talk about my ears that I entirely forgot it.

You know all about the change which was made in our name, when we were very young children, from the vulgar and undistinguished cognomen of Divers, to the noble and elegant one of De Vere? It seemed a little ridiculous, I confess; rather as if we were ashamed of the *old trade name;* but then it was a mere matter of taste, and you know it is an important fact in the science of jurisprudence that "possession is nine points of the law;" ergo, the name was our own, and we had a right to do as we pleased with it; so, following the fashion of this progressive age, we only improved it highly. But this change of name has led to not a few *contretemps* in our history. For example: Old Paul (our grandfather), and poor Rachel Hewlett (our aunt), did not for once imagine that the rich and haughty Mrs. De Vere, who paid a mere pittance for costly work, done at the expense of aching eyes, weary fingers, throbbing head, and sinking heart, was the daughter of one and the sister of the other. Oh, no! But if plain Mrs. Divers, Mrs. Margaret Divers, had been announced in that cold, desolate room, they would have known, at once, all they wished to know on earth, and heads or hearts need have ached no more. Oh, Harry! Harry! I am startled by my own conclusions. This thing, which but just now I considered a mere folly that could harm no living thing, has been magnified by its consequences into a heinous sin.

But I'll go on. I am a poor moralist, and am afraid I never repent of follies until it is too late. My dear Hal, I will describe the recognition between papa and Captain Dobbler, as if I had been third person present; for I got it from papa by little scraps at a time, and in such a sort as I could not do justice to. I'll try, however, and preserve the spirit and style of the two worthies. Last week, papa went, as usual, to the Exchange; and after hearing all the commercial, banking, and marine affairs of the day discussed, he settled himself in his old corner, adjusted his spectacles, and began to pore over the leaden columns of the ——, which contained political speeches, and all that sort of thing, that I consider immensely stupid. Soon after, a seafaring man came in, and taking down a file of very old papers, placed them on a table near papa, and was soon lost in studying their contents.

After examining every column and advertisement, he flung them from him, and, thumping the table with his brawny fist, exclaimed, "His v'yage is up. Poor fellow! Poor Jack! It's no use to be hauling over any more charts. I've clean lost the latitude *and* the longitude. Poor Maggie! Poor Divers!" Much astonished at hearing his own name made the subject of such a lamentation, papa laid down his paper and looked intently at the man, who, with his chin resting on his hand, now sat motionless, his eyes downcast, and an expression of perplexity, grief, and deep thoughtfulness on his face.

"Did I understand you to say *Divers*, just now, friend?" asked papa.

"Holloa, there! I thought I had the poop-deck to myself. Lord! Lord! a desolate island, with only the waves of the sea in sight, is nothing compared to coming into port, after a long cruise, and finding yourself alone—everybody dead, or wrecked, or blown off their course *in*tirely," he said, in a husky voice, as he arose and buttoned his shaggy pilot-cloth overcoat up to his chin.

"Yes," said papa, whose feelings were strangely interested, "the loneliness which sometimes overtakes the old amidst thousands of their kind is truly a dreary solitude. But for whom do you seek, friend? I am an old resident of this city. Possibly I can assist you."

A gleam of hope brightened up the brown face, and chased away, for a moment, the despondent expression from his eyes; but he shook his head, and, grasping papa's hand, replied, "It's no use, I'm afeard, shipmate—no use. I've overhauled them logs thar, and inspected all the deaths and marriages, but found nothing. Howsomever, I'll answer your signals. I'm a weather-beaten old sea-dog, and it's been a many years, by my log, since I hailed this 'ere port. *In* course, all ain't like it used to be. Old age has changed some; and some as used to welcome me to port, with eyes as bright as the lighthouse lamp, is laid up in their death-hammocks, and the rest is scattered here, there, and the Lord only knows where. But look'ee, shipmate, it's a long yarn, and I've got a choking in my lubberly old heart as won't let me spin it out if I would; howsomever, I'll just ax one question. Thar was a lad about these parts once by name of Jack Divers. He married my niece Maggie. I'd give heaps of gold to discover their latitude—"

"Are you Peggie's uncle?" cried papa, starting up.

"Not Peggy's, but Maggie's. My name's Dobbler. Her father was my brother; *in* course she's my niece. She married a taut merry lark by name of Divers. He was a calker by trade," said Captain Dobbler, slowly and gravely.

"Ahem! Did you know Divers?"

"Not since he was a lad."

"Would you know him again?"

"Let me see. If he's living, he's old and wrinkled and white-haired. But hold on thar—I remember—yes, I remember a scar he carried on his left wrist. He got it from a fall he had off a scaffolding, and, as he fell, he struck his wrist on an old anchor."

"It was one of the anchors of the Macedonian, I believe," said pa.

"Ship ahoy!—the devil! Who are you?" exclaimed Captain Dobbler.

"Look here," said papa, baring his wrist, "did you ever see that before?"

"Did I ever see the pints of the compass in a squall? Surely the signal must be true! Who are you?" he asked, and the rough old sailor trembled like a weak child.

"I am, by the grace of God, Jack Divers still, old friend, the husband of your niece Maggie, or Margaret, or Peggy, as I sometimes call her; and also, by the will of the world, the flesh, and the devil, John De Vere, at your service," cried papa, grasping his hands, and shaking them cordially. "You are welcome—thrice—three times three, welcome, old fellow!"

"And my niece—Maggie—" faltered the other.

"Oh, ahem! she's living and well. I am a rich man, Dobbler, and Maggie has her coach and her liveried servants, her silks, and velvets, and plumes, and high living and grand doings. Well-a-day! all womankind are alike."

"Poor Paul! Poor Paul! Poor Rache!" muttered the sailor.

"Who?" asked papa.

"Her father and sister. They thought she was dead."

And then followed the revelations of long years. Pa was much shocked when he heard all; but in that hour he regained his sturdy independence of character, as he proved, in the most unquestionable manner, the next day, at the interview between mamma, Captain Dobbler, and himself.

Now, dear Hal, 'tis past one o'clock. Aubry has been asleep three hours; and oh! my dearest Harry, I declare I am perfectly miserable, for I never discovered until to-night that the wretch—snores. Good-night. Don't forget those *Beguine* flowers. I want them for an old India vase, for which Aubry paid ninety dollars. It is the sweetest thing; covered with green snakes, big roses, tadpoles, and June-bugs or roaches, I don't know which, and butterflies. I am nodding my adieu,

BESSIE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SHOWING HOW LIFE'S PILGRIMS MEET, AND PART.

THE whole world seemed to be thronging into Brussels. It was the eve of the annual celebration of the glorious "three days," which had resulted in the expulsion of the hated Nassaus, and given independence and a sovereign of their own choice to the brave *Belges*. Every street was crowded with gay pedestrians, laughing and talking, as they good-naturedly jostled each other, about the *festival* of the morrow. Of the various groups that hurried along, some discussed the musical *programme*—some the composers of the past and present age—others talked of painting, some of philosophy, some of science; while not unfrequent gibes concerning the inglorious retreat of their Dutch masters produced hearty roars of laughter from the *masse*, whenever the *bonmots* were heard. Caps and blouses were the significant uniform of the evening, and whenever a personage appeared who, by his pen or physical courage, had borne a prominent part in their deliverance from oppression and misrule, prolonged *vivats* greeted him. The everlasting meerschaum rolled up clouds of incense from innumerable mouths, and military bands, on their way to the Grand Park, made the welkin ring with their patriotic, stirring strains. Well-dressed women and fair-haired children, laden with bouquets of early spring flowers, wound their way pleasantly through the crowd, and as they passed, hats touched the ground, and caps which formerly had to be stricken off by the *baton* of a marshal, when royalty, for which they felt no leal sympathies, drove in regal state through their midst, swept the dust whenever the veils of the fair pedestrians revealed familiar faces. Not the least interesting features of the scene were the *Beguines;* their hands folded and completely concealed by the voluminous folds of their serge sleeves, and their eyes cast down as they hurried to and fro on their missions of charity and religion. Vehicles of every description, from the lumbering baronial coach, with the insignia of a hundred quarterings on its panels, to the light market-wagon of the flower-decked peasants, and the broad-wheeled car from the Rhine country, rolled on in seemingly endless processions, emptying their living loads at the portals of hotels and more humble hostelries, until a looker-on might well wonder where in all Brus-

sels could be found lodging-places for such an innumerable company. And over all was the golden glory of an unclouded sunset. Before the portals of the *Hôtel de Français*, Mynheer Schartzenhretzen, the landlord, stood executing his most courtly bows, until his face purpled with lurid threatenings of apoplexy, while he welcomed, with well-turned compliments, a party of English or American travellers to his house—who had secured with him an idea of their consequence by sending on a courier two days in advance, to secure a suite of apartments for their use. Two ladies and two gentlemen composed the party. The ladies were so muffled in their veils that it was impossible to tell whether they were young or old, handsome or ugly. Only one fact could be ascertained—they were tall and exquisitely formed, and had the feet and graceful step of Andalusians. Of the gentlemen, one was old, very old, judging from the snowy whiteness of his hair; but if one only noted the vivacity of his eyes, and the elasticity of his movements, he would have felt that his real age was a problematical question. His companion was wrapped in a large furred cloak, and the only portion of his face that was visible beneath his travelling cap was pale and languid. His step was slow and feeble, as, leaning on the arm of the elder gentleman, he proceeded, with frequent pauses, up the broad flight of stairs leading into the hotel. He was an invalid, it was plain, on his way possibly to some of the famous German spas; or the brunnen of Langen Schwalbach, which just at that period was considered of little less importance to health than the waters of life and eternal youth would be to mankind, if they could only be discovered. A few waves of bright golden hair escaped from beneath his cap over the large velvet collar of his cloak. He was an object of great and tender solicitude to the whole party. Preceded by their obsequious host, they had nearly reached the apartments that had been engaged for them when a *major-domo*, pale and agitated, intercepted their progress, by informing Mynheer Schartzenhretzen, that the "sick gentleman from Aix-le-Chapelle, Monsieur Anglais, had by mistake been taken into the smallest of the suite of rooms engaged for *milords* and the doctor, and one of the madams from the *Beguinage* declared it would be murder to remove him."

"La Diable! ten thousand heads! But he must go! my house will be ruined! To have a dying man in it at such a time, with a disease which is probably infectious! Order them at once to convey him to the hospital," exclaimed mynheer, in French, which is the popular language in Brussels.

"No!" said one of the ladies, "we will not be a party to such inhuman proceedings, monsieur. The sick person must not, and

shall not be disturbed on our account. We can get on very well; one room less is of very little importance to travellers."

"Madam is very humane—very charitable; but, madam, consider; the character of my house will suffer—the dread of infection will drive every living soul from it. I shall be entirely ruined—by a stranger, too, whom nobody knows; who travels without a valet or baggage—on the top of a common diligence, and wears clothes that a Jew would not buy," exclaimed the host, bowing in agony.

"The greater reason exists, then, monsieur, for us to aid him," observed the lady in a calm, commanding tone. "He is a stranger in a strange land, maybe dying! He must not be removed. We know not who he is, but your interests shall not suffer by allowing him to remain; we will be responsible for any expenses he may incur. Now show us on, if you please." Just then, one of the half-veiled *Beguines* glided from a door at no great distance, and was going past them, when some remark in English, which was made by the elder gentleman of the party relative to the sick stranger, arrested her attention. She lifted her meek eyes to his—paused an instant as if she would speak—then looked down again as if her heart had failed her. The gentlemen bared their heads with profound respect, and the ladies drew a little aside, to allow her to pass, when she suddenly addressed them in a peculiarly sweet tone of voice, and inquired "if there were any English among them."

"We are Americans, lady! Can we be of service?" inquired the elder gentleman.

"Great service, monsieur," she replied quickly; "in yonder room, almost in the last agonies of death and remorse, lies a poor stranger penitent. He is evidently without means, and without friends. He is your countryman! Will you not see him?"

"Mother! I will go, madam—pray do not object—I really feel much better," said the invalid stripling eagerly; while his face flushed crimson, either with the exertion, or the divine wish to do good.

"Not this evening, my beloved child," replied the lady, "tomorrow you will be stronger; it would only agitate your delicate frame now to witness a scene of suffering. Our friend and I will see him immediately and minister promptly to his wants."

"May the Lord God deal gently with him!" murmured the stripling; "may the consoler of the afflicted support him!"

"I will show madam and monsieur the room—I have another errand to do ere night!" remarked the *Beguine*, intent on her

mission of charity. They followed her, and entered noiselessly the stranger's room.

"She's at the very root of the matter; they'd squeeze charity out of a sponge, these *Beguines*, and there's no help; they come begging in the name of the divine God, and who dare refuse them?" muttered Mynheer, as, half ashamed of his conduct, he pioneered the invalid and his female companion along. "Here, she comes by this evening just as the diligence stops—the man faints—she orders my servants to pick him up and carry him in—they dare not refuse, for they make people believe they minister to the holy Jesus himself, when they do good to the poor. So—these people, though, who gave up their room whether or no to him, must be of the right sort, or they'd have bolted in a huff! Well—I won't overcharge them! ten thousand! no! I'll give half his expenses in—and—excellent idea! let it go in on the score of my almsgiving. That is killing two birds with one stone, by St. Ursula! Here, my lord! enter! These are the very finest rooms in all Brussels! They command a view of the grandest church in the city; from the windows you will see the procession to-morrow, and the royal family go by to the cathedral, in great state, to sing the *Te Deum* with the people, and assist at the grand high mass! It will be very fine! Enter!" said the host, ushering them in with an air which seemed to defy the least criticism on his handsome arrangements. Here we will leave them, and proceed through various thoroughfares, down, across the antique, massive bridge, into the old Spanish quarter of the town. Here there were shadow and quiet, and in the moonlight the quaint old houses, gray with age and grim with time, like the wornout grandees of an *ancien régime*, looked as if they were standing proudly aloof, with dignified contempt, from the gay modern innovations which were hemming them in on every side. They were relics of a prouder and perchance a better age, and looked as if they could not forget it, if man did. But we must not pause now to moralize about the old Spanish houses of Brussels, but enter a fortress-like gateway, iron studded and arched, which opens on a broad dim court, leading into one of them. In former days it had been the abode of the immortal Vandyke. There he had given some of the brightest visions of his ideal and almost breathing glory of life and form; and within those walls the magnificent Rubens, surrounded by every appliance of luxury that a highly refined taste with its thousand creative wants could suggest, made his canvas glow with life's most poetic loveliness, and held a court of genius where royalty itself felt honored to worship. For these associations, and its quiet location, it had been chosen by the American envoy for his

residence. But his life was far from being solitary, or as isolated as such a choice seemed to indicate. His intelligence and genius, the dignity and suavity of his manners, attracted around him a circle of the choice spirits of the time. But these causes alone did not endear him to the brave *Belges*. It was his earnest and expressive sympathy with their determined and progressive independence, his eloquent but silent attention to the graphic accounts of their revolution, when his eyes and lips kindled with more than words could speak. The same high qualities which had won the distinguished post he now occupied, commanded for Henry De Vere abroad the admiration of all. From Leopold he received peculiar marks of friendship, not in his official character, of course, but reciprocities of amenity and confidence that one private gentleman could bestow on another. It was his majesty's pleasure to receive him at certain times *sans cérémonie*, when he listened with profound interest to the wonderful accounts of the developments and inexhaustible resources of the grand confederacy of North America, of the native talents of its sons, of the abilities and eloquence of its statesmen, the equity of its laws, and the responsibility of its legislatures to the sovereign people who elected them! It was a subject of all others the best calculated to call forth the highest toned sentiments of his gifted mind; his *amor patræ* kindled up into eloquent beauty the most common topics connected with that country's honor and interests.

His popularity so unsought, the homage paid to his talents, the smiles and flattering attention of the fairest women of the court and society, were enough to have turned a wiser head and more experienced heart than his. But no! there was one memory that clung to him—one hope, one anxious yearning thought which, as a centre of authority, held every other emotion in steady obedience; and this thought, this memory, this hope was of the dark-eyed maiden of Woodreve Manor.

He sat alone in his quiet sanctum, so moody and abstracted that the sound of the distant music which mingled with the joyous din of the voices of thousands who thronged the streets of Brussels, floated around him unnoticed. The solitary lamp was shaded, and the moon-light, still and pure, poured its glistening flood through the narrow grated windows and lay in silvery ripples along the marble floor. The shaded lamp and the moonlight combined, threw a fine *clare-oscura* through the lofty apartment. The wainscoting was black and polished with age, and from the carved foliage of the cornices, grotesque Cupids and grinning satyrs, half hidden by broad leaves and clustering grapes, looked down in elfin mockery. A few fine pictures relieved the gloom of the walls,

and a large vase of flowers stood on the tiled hearth, dispensing delicious odors through the shadowy room. The story of the "Prodigal Son" was skilfully illustrated on the porcelain tiles of the mantel, but by the uncertain light only faint outlines could be discerned. A few Persian mats relieved the marble floor of its otherwise comfortless aspect, and chairs, massive black and perpendicular, were ranged in regular files, along the walls on each side like petrified grenadiers. The table occupying the centre of the apartment was of a piece with the rest of the furniture. It was strewed with papers, maps, and drawing materials; but these were pushed aside as if from over weariness, and De Vere, with his elbow leaning on it, and his face half shaded by his hand, sat yielding to an *abandon* of retrospective thought which made the hours pass away unheeded.

Once only did words escape his lips—words which seemed, like drops, to overflow the full chalice of his heart unbidden. "Unwedded! Edith free and unwedded, and I chained by cold but important duties to my post!" But the thought that she *was free*, and the hope that she might yet be his, calmed the regrets stirred up by the thoughts of absence, and a serenity which almost burst into a smile settled on his face.

"Monsieur de Vere," said a middle-aged gentleman, cautiously picking his way through the room. "Ha! I've had my race for naught. He's gone."

"Most excellent councillor Von Pappheim, I am your debtor a thousand times for this honor," exclaimed De Vere, starting up, and removing the dark shade from the lamp to afford his visitor more light. "Pray be seated."

"No, monsieur, excuse me. I have no time. I popped into a dozen places to-night, expecting to find thee, and everywhere it was, 'Councillor, where is Mons. De Vere?' until I really fancied myself thy keeper, and responsible for thy appearance forthwith; so, to save myself, I determined to come to head-quarters at once. I promised everybody to bring thee back. Come, thou."*

"Shall I make a frank confession, Monsieur Von Pappheim?" replied De Vere, laughing at the earnestness of the other. "I feel it due to myself to do so, or else I may be charged with the affectation of being an *ennuyé*."

"Confess, monsieur. But I must be equally frank. Whatever may be thy confession, thy penance is predestined. Thou art to go instantly with me to the *Théâtre Royale*, where their majesties

* *Thee* and *thou*—terms of familiar endearment in many places on the Continent.

are; where all the beauties, foreign and native, will greet thee with smiles; where Celeste is making the divinest *entrechats*, and Catalani condescends to rival the songs of an angel. Come."

"Pardon me, most excellent, if I decline the penance. I have letters from home which demand immediate notice."

"So. If official business is on hand, I must begone without thee; but I shall certainly be pelted with fans and vinaigrettes, and mobbed by velvets, plumes, and satins, if I return alone. I will not venture on it. No. I will retire quietly home, monsieur, court a divine afflatus, and finish my treatise on mesmeric influences," said the councillor, in a *serio-comic* tone.

"Not precisely official, monsieur—"

"Come, then."

"But of the first importance."

"*J'ai l'honneur de vous saluer*," said the councillor, who, bolting out in haste, found himself in the midst of a laughing group of the most distinguished young citizens of Brussels, to all of whom he was well known.

"The excellent councillor," cried the foremost. "Is Monsieur l'Envoy within?"

"Thou wilt find him within, Baron Otho; but if thou art come for him, thou might as well invite yonder leaden statue to take a moonlight stroll," laughed the councillor, as he broke away from them. "Adieu."

De Vere threw open his door, and invited the party, in cordial tones, to enter; which they did, but declined seats, declaring they had only come to bear him off in triumph to the various scenes of festivity the city exhibited.

"The most magnificent fireworks, monsieur. Not mere rockets, but blazing delineations of our Revolution, that are rushing heavenward to tell the stars how the *Belges* prize freedom," exclaimed Baron Otho.

"'The *Belges deserve* freedom,' is the message that the stars will return by these fire-winged envoys," said De Vere, with quiet enthusiasm.

With one accord every cap was raised; and, standing uncovered, they sang, with thrilling expression, a verse of the *Marseillaise*, which, since the restoration of their civil and social privileges, had been a popular favorite with all classes.

"America was our Gamaliel. When time shall be no more, and earth crumbles beneath the eternal billow, then, and not until then, shall her glorious confederacy be shaken," exclaimed the baron.

De Vere bowed low. One prolonged *vivat* for the land of his

love greeted his patriotic heart. It was the homage of strangers to the majesty of its principles—principles taught by Heaven—baptized in the blood of patriot martyrs; and, in their triune qualities of fraternity, equality, and self-government, opening the portals of liberty as a refuge for the oppressed and sufferingof every clime. He responded briefly, but eloquently; and, after pledging each other in delicious old Rhenish wine, they would have borne him off with them to scenes of splendor and mirth; but he again pleaded "letters from home," and they were too polite to urge him further. In the midst of their cheerful and exciting interview, the *Beguine*, from the *Hôtel de Français*, glided in and stood with folded hands and downcast eyes near the group. With profound respect the gay party greeted her. Had she been a serene highness, or a Kaiser's crowned queen, their manner could not have been more expressive of veneration than that which they voluntarily assumed to the meek and lowly handmaid of charity. In the same low sweet voice that plead for the dying stranger at the *Hôtel de Français*, she informed De Vere "that one of his countrymen, stricken by poverty and death, prayed to see him ere his mortal career was over."

"Will my kind friends excuse me?" asked De Vere, turning towards his guests; "here is an apparent and imperative duty, which must not be neglected."

"Go," whispered Baron Otho; "the Sister Monica would not seek thee almost at midnight unless on some extraordinary errand of charity. The good God speed thee!"

"So," muttered one, "he prefers a tragedy, with a *Beguine* for a prompter, to the pleasures of such a night as this, with ourselves to give each pleasure a zest!"

As soon as the *Beguine* ascertained that the American envoy would promptly obey her charitable demand, she disappeared as much like a gliding shadow as she had come, and drove off in a small close carriage, in the direction of the *Hôtel de Français*. When De Vere arrived, he found her awaiting him.

"Follow me, monsieur!" she said, leading the way. In a few moments they stood by the bedside of the dying stranger. A taper, which gave but a flickering light, threw long shadows on the wall, as it burned dimly in a distant niche, before a small statue of the Madonna and Holy Child Jesus. De Vere could only distinguish the contour of a pallid face, surrounded by dark, clustering hair, which lay heavy and moist with the death dews on the snowy pillow. There was no moonlight creeping in through vines; there was no odor of flowers—no tears to warm up the gathering chills—no love to encompass the stranger, as his steps tended

downward to the Lethean billows of death! Only *charity*—the first-born and best beloved of God*—stood a tearful watcher, over the mysterious unveiling of the soul from its mortal bonds. At a distance, seated in the deep embrasure of a window, was an old man, leaning on his elbow, with his head bowed on his breast, and his eyes closed. He had come thither to watch; but nature yielded to fatigue and the demands of age, for he had travelled far that day; and a deep slumber had stolen over his wearied frame. Near him knelt a veiled female form before the little oratory, whom De Vere, by the dim light, imagined to be one of the *Beguines*.

"He is come," whispered Sister Monica to the dying man, who opened his eyes, looked wildly up, as if he had been awakened from a troubled dream, then gradually settled his gaze on the face of De Vere.

"You do not know me, it seems?" he said in a hollow voice.

"Pardon me if I do not," said De Vere, taking his hand kindly. He snatched it from him with a shudder.

"I injured you, De Vere. I would have ruined you if I could," he said after a pause.

"Forget it as I forgive it, friend, whatever it was, whoever you are," he replied.

"Thy God—or nature—bestowed wonderful and noble gifts on thee, De Vere; but thou art not a whit less indebted to destiny than I. Thee—it has made the honor and pride of thy kind; me—an outcast"—he said, bitterly.

"Hush—sh—sh—talk not so!" said the *Beguine*, quickly; "our Lord God sometimes honors us by laying his cross heavily on us; but he died on that cross to redeem us from the bondage of sin; and not that we might be chained hand and foot for perdition." Then she resumed her prayers, at his feet, where she had been kneeling ever since she returned.

"Can I aid you?" inquired De Vere, looking with extraordinary interest on the pale wan face before him, in which he perceived, now that his eyes were more accustomed to the gloom of the room, traces of great beauty, and something strangely familiar.

"Your aid? no! Only your forgiveness," was all he uttered.

"For what?"

"I crossed your path once, De Vere—I tried to wreck your fair name—your happiness—your all! She loved you—I knew it—I saw it; but I—I poisoned your Eden—for you also loved

* "God is love."

her—Edith Willoughby, I mean. Your love was high, and like yourself—free from all debasing influences. You deserved her—and but for me—might have won her"—he said, at intervals.

De Vere's whole frame trembled with emotion, for he knew him well now; and to forgive one who had so deeply stung him, who had so basely undermined the fabric of his earthly happiness, was a hard thing to do; but there he lay—a fallen foe—helpless—dying—repentant; and he dare not—he wished not to refuse the boon. Moral and holy influences triumphed over the warring passions and instincts of humanity, which, ever prone to evil, had uncoiled themselves in his heart, and stung him keenly with memories of the past. He took both the cold, attenuated hands in his, and said, "I forgive you, Walter Shirley, with as perfect forgiveness as one erring man can forgive another."

A serene smile flitted over the *Beguine's* face, and the lurid, troubled scowl passed away from Shirley's brow, as he murmured a few words of thanks.

"Now," whispered the *Beguine*—"now, oh dying man! think of the forgiveness of the Lord God—it is all that can aid thee now! I will bring thee a holy man who will help thee to make thy peace with heaven."

"Trouble me not with fables, good sister—nay, be not hurt! You have been to me a ministering angel—but—I—have no faith—in priestcraft—or what men call—religion. I would die—as I have lived," he murmured. "One more favor—I beg—awaken yonder old man—summon *her* to my side—I must not leave my work incomplete! De Vere—leave me not—" he said, pointing to the two persons we have before described. They came, and observed for the first time that another person besides the *Beguine* was with the dying one. De Vere's back was towards them as they approached—only the outline of his cheek was visible; but the old man with the snow-white hair started when his eyes fell on him. Deliberately fitting on his spectacles, he walked around where he could obtain a full view of the face. Henry De Vere raised his eyes at the moment, an exclamation of joyful recognition escaped his lips, and, opening his arms, he clasped them around him.

"Harry!"

"Mr. Bedford—my dearest—best friend!" It was all that either could say.

"If I have the honor of meeting with Mr. De Vere," said the lady, coming forward, and speaking, in a sad and subdued voice, "may I beg that he will not refuse the hand of the mother of that son whose best friend he proved himself?" De Vere was

almost overcome by the sudden meeting; he bowed, and without speaking, took Mrs. Willoughby's proffered hand, and pressed it gently.

"It is all right. Call *her*—her—Edith, I mean—quick—I am dying!" gasped Walter Shirley. "Bring her hither, I say—I command it, and will ye refuse the commands of the dying? Ye dare not! Nay, Aunt Willoughby—I entreat—I entreat. This is no time for false proprieties."

"I will go—it will probably be better to avoid a meeting at such a time, and under such circumstances!" whispered De Vere.

"You shall not go, De Vere—you promised to remain with me—if *you* go, Edith Willoughby need not come!" exclaimed Walter Shirley, whose hearing became more acute as the power of other senses failed.

"Be calm, Walter—I will bring her," said Mrs. Willoughby.

"They have forgiven me, too, De Vere! They know I can harm them no more!" he said bitterly, as Mrs. Willoughby left the room.

Still prayed the *Beguine* for his departing soul—hoping that, at the last moment, it would utter one cry to Heaven for forgiveness.

Ere long, Mrs. Willoughby, Edith, and the young invalid, Arthur Vernon, came in. He did not observe De Vere, who stood back in the shadow—he scarcely raised his eyes, for, like the *Beguine*, his business there was not of earth, but Heaven—so, kneeling at the foot of the couch, he took from his bosom the ivory crucifix, that companion of all his early wanderings, and held it, so that the death-stricken might behold it while he prayed in silence. And one, to have seen the rare angel loveliness of his pale face, around which flowed rich waves of golden hair, the uplifted eyes, and saddened brow, on which a celestial beam seemed dawning, might have imagined that he was the guardian spirit of that erring and sinful man, pleading, praying, until the last life-chord was severed, that he might be lured to God ere life and hope were past forever.

"Walter!" said Edith, in a low, gentle voice, after she had stood several moments beside him, and found that he did not notice her; "I have come, Walter, at your bidding."

"Ha! Edith! I cannot see—what means this sudden gloom? Is yonder light extinguished? But come, the time is brief—De Vere, where are you? your hand, De Vere—Edith Willoughby, yours—hasten—so—In life I dissevered ye—mine be the act, in the hour of death, to unite—" A dreadful spasm convulsed his frame—one cry of anguish escaped his lips, and his spirit wan-

dered out from its bonds of clay to contend with the awful mysteries of eternity. Edith felt her strength failing—the scene had been so sudden and shocking; then her unexpected meeting with Henry De Vere, and the manner of the meeting, altogether overpowered her. She tried to leave the room, her steps faltered; but his watchful eye was on her, and, throwing his arm around her—her head drooped on his shoulder—and feeling that she was his—his forever—he bore her away, attended by Mrs. Willoughby, from the terrible scene of death.

"Edith—beloved—long cherished—first love of my heart!" he whispered, when, slowly recovering, her eyes fell softly on him, and tears blended with the gentle smile that lit up her face. "I cannot lose thee again, Edith—say, beloved, must I lose thee again, ever?"

"Mother! mother!" she said, clasping her hands, and looking up imploringly to Mrs. Willoughby, who leaned over her, "speak for me—you know all!"

"She is yours, Henry De Vere. My gift to you! Noble, truthful, and unfaltering has been your upward career; but more precious to me than all your honors, more worthy of my eternal gratitude, is the kindness you so freely lavished on a friendless stranger—a foreign stripling, whom you protected from want, brutality, and suffering. *That stripling was my child!* In exchange for him, take the next dearest treasure of my heart—Edith. But hither he comes. Arthur, behold!" But ere she could speak another word, with a cry of rapture, which blended in its utterance the name of "*Henri!*" he sprang forward, and in another moment was folded closely to De Vere's manly and sensitive heart, where he lay panting, too full of joy to speak, like a bird that, through perils and distance, had once more reached its sheltered nest. But the effort and emotion together exhausted him, and De Vere tenderly laid the delicate form on a pile of cushions, where he lay as pale and silent as a marble effigy. Mrs. Willoughby administered a cordial which ere long imparted temporary strength to the feeble frame of the patient sufferer, who, in obedience to the mandate of his medical advisers, forbore speaking, when these debilitating attacks visited him, for fear of rupturing a bloodvessel; but his countenance, radiant and calm, indicated all the eloquent joy that filled his heart.

Soon after, Mr. Bedford, who had remained in the room of death, to superintend the last offices that human care could perform for the forsaken clay, came in, with a sad, heavy look; but when he saw those beloved and familiar faces grouped together, as he had often seen them in his heart-dreams, the gloom passed

away, and a smile overspread his countenance as he lifted his hands in thankfulness, and blessed them with a silent benediction.

Mrs. Willoughby's thoughts lingered with the dead; the ties of consanguinity and old association could not be forgotten, and, leaving the group to the enjoyment of their own quiet sense of happiness, she returned to look with compassionate forgiveness on the beautiful wreck which death had left on the sands of time, the wreck of a being once as fair in his stately manhood as were the "sons of God" who of old walked on earth. The marble brow was calm; the high, finely-chiselled nose, the proudly curved lips, were all restored by the everlasting moulder—death—to their lofty beauty. Yes! save the look of scorn that the still features wore, the clay was perfect in the image and likeness of its Creator. But the soul—the erring, faithless, immortal essence—oh time—oh eternity—whither fled that soul? The *Beguine* had glided away, when the eternal seal was set on the spirit of him she would fain have led to God, back to her cloister, clinging more fondly than ever to the cross and crown of thorns, which, transitory in their sufferings as life, would be her passport to the beatific vision of eternity.

With De Vere's hand clasped in his, Vernon had fallen into a light doze. Near them, on a low *tabouret*, sat Edith, holding a vial of aromatic drops, with which to refresh the invalid, should he need them, and watching with tender solicitude every change that flitted, like the "shadows of clouds," over his face. But few words had passed between Edith and De Vere; but these few were enough. The rapture of their long-separated and faithful hearts in this hour of reunion, which had been attended by such strange incidents, would have been desecrated by language which was all inadequate to express its depth. The death-scene left its solemn shadow over all, but they knew that shadow would pass away like the rest; and their minds were too well disciplined, their affections too pure, not to be patient, until, with the sunlight and life-stir of a brighter morrow, they could mutually reveal the trying story of their past.

Mr. Bedford approached them, and paused before De Vere, on whose face the light from a lamp near them shone, brightly revealing every noble lineament. Through his spectacles he scanned every feature, and looked with an inquiring gaze into the clear, unclouded eyes that blanched not beneath his scrutiny. "So," he murmured; then, reaching out his hand, he pushed back the curling masses of dark hair that lay on De Vere's broad forehead, and resumed his study. De Vere was, at first, surprised at his

unusual proceeding; then amused; and, finally, a smile of yore burst like a sun-ray over his countenance. It was reflected by Edith. Then Mr. Bedford, with another "so," expressive of great inward satisfaction, smiled also.

"Why did you not write, Harry? I have not heard from you for one long year," he inquired, abruptly. "I suppose, from your silence, that the tales we heard about the opera-dancer and a noble young *fraulien* are true?"

"Dear sir," interposed Edith, "we have been on the wing, for months past, through southern Europe. Mr. De Vere's letters have doubtless miscarried."

"Of course, Etha; of course, child. But let him answer for himself. I am perfectly aware that no jury would have *you* among them if he were on trial for a capital offence. Now, Harry, tell me."

"My best of friends, the simple fact that I did not know you had left the United States must be my apology. I have written, and written again, directing my letters to your address at home; nor had I the remotest idea of your being in Europe until our meeting to-night."

"Very well. So far, so good. I shall doubtless find my letters at home, when I get there."

"You cannot imagine my annoyance. Nay, I must confess it, I felt hurt at receiving no response whatever to my communications, particularly those which contained inquiries important to my happiness," observed De Vere, glancing at Edith. "The rest related to matters connected with my affairs at home, and subjects suggested by a residence in this truly delightful country."

"Not a word yet of the opera-dancer, or the baron's handsome daughter?" said Mr. Bedford, folding his arms.

"I only did, sir, what any humane person would have done in my place," he began.

"You did?" said Mr. Bedford, dryly.

"It is never agreeable to me to speak of myself," he continued, flushing up. "But, in the present instance, I must yield to necessity. There was a young creature, pretty and virtuous, belonging to the *ballet*, who supported her aged parents by her dancing, which was really graceful; but one night, from some unfortunate cause or other, she lost her balance in the midst of a *pirouette*, and, in trying to recover her posture, her foot slipped, and she fell with such violence that she broke a limb. Although she suffered intensely, her sole anxiety was about her parents, and how they would obtain their daily bread; for the idea of their being dependent on charity was distressing in the extreme to her. The

physicians told her she must be calm, or fever and inflammation would ensue. But she asked, plaintively, 'How can I be still—how can my heart be still, when I know *they* suffer?'"

"Well," said Mr. Bedford, as De Vere hesitated a little while; "go on. What was it all to you?"

"Personally, nothing; but to humanity, all. She was carried with care to the hospital, and sufficient funds placed in the hands of the *Beguines*, who are the ministering angels of that place of suffering, not only to defray her expenses, but to furnish a necessary support for her parents, until she could assist them again."

"And did she recover, this noble and heroic girl?" asked Edith, with kindling cheeks.

"She recovered," replied De Vere, looking fondly on her, "but did not resume her profession. Her limb was so injured that it was impossible; but the charitable ladies at the *Beguinage* took her under their protection, and taught her the art of making wax fruit and flowers, from the sale of which she derives a handsome support. Her story excited great interest in Brussels; an interest which her virtue and filial devotion were well worthy of. Some absurd reports were, however, mixed up with the affair, which I scarcely think it necessary to say were utterly false."

"It has turned out just as I expected it would," said Mr. Bedford, rubbing his hands together in the old way. "I understand the whole thing exactly. You were the benefactor of this distressed family. Just like you. Thank God, the Harry De Vere of to-night is the Harry De Vere of my old heart. You may have him, Etha;—but stop! What about the noble *fraulien* with whom you were in love?"

"Behold her—the first, only beloved *fraulien* of my heart," he replied, clasping Edith's hand in his own. "It has never known another."

"And thine, Edith?" asked Mr. Bedford.

"Mine? Its faith and truth have been sorely tried. But now—" she hesitated.

"*Now*. Nay, falter not, beloved," said De Vere, gently. "How is it now?"

"Now, the bitter ordeal past, its brightest dreams are more than realized in finding another as true and constant," she said, in a low voice, while the damask hue deepened on her cheeks and brow. Then, pressing gently the hand that still held hers, she whispered "Good-night," and left the room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE GOOD-NIGHT.

VERNON'S recuperative powers received a momentary impetus during the short stay of our pilgrims in Brussels. The weather was balmy and lovely, which enabled him to drive or take a short promenade every day. The picture galleries and fine old churches, among whose dim aisles the imagination held pleasant converse with time, of stirring and glorious tradition—the shadowy forest beyond the city, which also presented to his amused fancy legendary associations, were his favorite places of resort. At intervals, when his cough was not troublesome, he sketched; and once or twice attempted to color his designs, but the smell of the oils overpowered him, and compelled him to desist. The quiet flow of happiness around him, and the confidential spirit that marked the intercourse of those he most loved on earth, exercised such a genial charm over him that the current of disease seemed to pause in its silent ravages on his system. Mrs. Willoughby was full of hope; and Edith, through the medium of her own happiness, could perceive nothing in the brightened eye and glowing cheeks of the invalid but indications of returning health. Even Mr. Bedford was sanguine—not of his recovery, but a prolongation of his life. De Vere was with them every moment he could spare from his official duties.

But in the midst of their hopes and happy exultations, the weather lowered, the winds came chill and piercing from the distant mountains, and a heavy mist enveloped everything in its damp embrace. The delicate frame of Vernon yielded to its depressing influences; his cough became more frequent, and his rest more broken by fevers, and the debilitating night-sweats, than ever; but he murmured not—an angelic patience supported him, and of them all, his face was the only one that wore a smile. It was agreed that, as soon as the weather again became bland, they would recommence their journey. The thought was rife with pain to them all, for one link in the chain of their love would be disunited—De Vere could not accompany them; his presence was necessary in Brussels for the honor and interests of his country; and duty to that was the paramount principle of his life. But when the hour of separation came, he went with them some leagues

on their pilgrimage towards the Neiderwald, whither they were going to spend the summer months, among the lovely valleys and sunny hill-sides of the Rhine.

"Farewell, brother of my soul—farewell, Henry! Twice hast thou met me a wandering pilgrim; our next meeting will be where life's weary pilgrims repose forever," murmured Arthur Vernon, as his head reclined on De Vere's bosom, and tears flowed silently over his cheeks.

"Hope, Arthur; yield not to gloomy fancies!" replied De Vere, holding him more closely to his heart.

"I am filled with hope, Henry, which is eternal!" he replied, quickly.

Tender and touching were the *adieux* of the rest; and through their tears they gazed after one another, until distance made all indistinct.

A few days they rested at the quiet and beautiful little village of Neudorf; the change of weather and scene, and the wild picturesque views of the country through which they slowly travelled, again revived the invalid, and, more hopefully, they proceeded by easy stages towards Mainz. On their route, they reposed a short time at Erbach, Hattenheim, and Johannesberg, which, situated at the foot of a picturesque hill on whose summit proudly rises the marble palace of Metternich, afforded them many points of interest. At last they reached their destined spot of rest—a *hof* which had been vacated by its inmates for the purpose of emigrating to America, a short time previous, and which had been secured for the Willoughbys by the kindness of a *compagnon du voyage*, who had preceded them some weeks to the Rhine land. Located beautifully on the sloping side of a mountain, it commanded one of the finest and most legendary prospects on the Rhine. High above them, standing on a point of the Neiderwald, like a deserted eyrie, were the ruins of the *Rosser*, an old feudal castle; below lay belts of oak foliage, waving and rustling in the summer winds, like glittering zones of emerald; while still farther down wrestled and tumbled the Rhine billows, in whose midst, like gems on the waves, reposed three Eden-like isles, pinnacled by graceful poplars, and fringed with willows whose drooping tendrils made love to the whispering river. From one arose the ruins of the *Mausethurm*, where, legends say, the infamous Hatto took shelter from myriads of ferocious rats, which, from the period of his murderous cruelty to the famine-stricken peasantry, who had applied to him for aid from his bursting garners, had ruthlessly pursued him. Even here, isolated in his lonely tower, and surrounded by the waves, he did not escape, but perished miserably, literally torn to death

by these singular avengers. On the opposite side of the river, as an *amende honorable* to religion and humanity for this enduring memorial of sin and crime, rises the *Rochus capelle*, which was erected in thanksgiving to Heaven for the cessation of the plague. With the sunlight or moon rays, brooding like a glory around it, the heart of the gazer turned thitherward with a feeling of refreshment from the gloomy tower of Hatto, feeling earnestly and sadly how the beautiful earth can be marred by crime, and its sunniest scenes clouded by inhumanity. There, like the spirit of a hoary Kaiser in solemn and beautiful pomp, rich in wild legends, and filled with dreams of old, arose the old castle of *Rhinestien;* while below it, glistening among the trees, lay the distant town of Bingen, its graceful bridge spanning the Nahe, which, brawling and noisy, pours its discolored waters into the clear green crystal of the Rhine.

On these and many other lovely and remarkable features of nature and the past, did the eyes of the Willoughbys rest, whenever they looked forth from the windows or grounds of the *hof.* Surrounded by flowers of every hue, and draped by vines, which hung earthward heavy clusters of purple fruit, and sheltered by great shade-trees, beneath whose leaves innumerable song-birds trilled their unwearied song, there was such a home look, and such home music around the *hof,* that they often felt as if under the influence of some spell, which carried them on instant flight to their beloved Woodreve.

But he, for whose sake they had wandered in a strange land, faded daily! They would have gone again to southern Italy; but he objected strongly to being removed, and they yielded, for it was evident to the most hopeful heart among them that the "golden bowl of life would soon be broken." Mrs. Willoughby's anguish was keen when she felt that the cheatery of Hope was over. Many and long were the years she had sought him sorrowing; few and brief had been the days of their reunion; but Heaven had given him, and Heaven now recalled its bright gift, leaving her naught to do but prepare her heart for the blow of separation, then, on the angelic ladder of faith, follow him thitherward. Vernon could walk no further now than the little hermitage chapel on the hill-side, and ere long his increasing weakness obliged him to discontinue his visits there; but the good cure, his consoler, spent one hour with him daily in cheerful converse, which ever directed itself heavenward. Frequent letters from De Vere to Edith, filled with hope, and love, and dreams of their future, came like angel visitors to her drooping heart. He also wrote frequently to Vernon, who kept them in his portfolio, always within reach, and often begged his mother or Edith to read them aloud to

him, seeming to derive the greatest pleasure from their cheerful contents.

One night they had watched over him, dreading the chime of every hour, lest it should be his last. There was no pain, no agony, only a gradual ebbing away of life's bright billow—a silent closing of its chalice leaves—a serene pluming of the spirit wings for that home whence, already, brightness flickered down on them. Towards dawn the moon rose, full and fair, over the Neiderwald; the Taunus hills were crowned with pearls, and the quivering tops of the old forest trees netted over with meshes of silver. Between its dark shores, from Bingen to Mainz, the Rhine gleamed like a milky-way; nay, its whirling eddies and glittering foam concentrating here and there a nucleus of light like starry constellations. It was beautiful, like the night of death opening to the dawn of a day supernal. Even the ruined towers, wrapped in their silvery haze, appeared to reclaim from time the glories it had robbed them of, and looked proudly down on the billows as they swept past.

Presently, floating out on the night winds, came the sound of music, solemn and sweet, as it rose and fell in prolonged cadences. It was Mrs. Willoughby's organ, one that had been brought from Bingen to the *hof*, soon after their arrival.

"Kiss me, *madre bella*," said the dying youth; "then sing the *Laudate Dominum*. I feel weary, and *the morning will soon dawn*." Music frequently soothed him to slumber when all else failed to do so—music of that kind. "Here, dear Etha," he continued, as she knelt beside him, "here is a rose the good cure brought me, last evening, from the hermitage altar, when he came to anoint me for my journey, Etha. Keep it, sister, in memory of this night. And Etha, listen, dear—to-morrow, sever one of these long curls from my head, and give it, with my love, to Henry." Then he paused to listen to the thrilling music. "Kiss me, Etha. There, leave me now," he whispered. "I shall sleep in a few moments." And while the jubilant words of the *Laudate Dominum* ascended heavenward, his eyes gently closed—a smile, serene and holy, settled on his face—his transparent fingers folded the image of the Crucified to his heart—and, while the day dawned, and the stars melted away in its broader light, his spirit went forth with angels to the DAY ETERNAL. Mrs. Willoughby, when she turned, ever watchful, from the instrument, thought he slept, and the holy strains died away beneath her fingers; then rising, she noiselessly approached his couch, and, half leaning on his pillow, overcome by ceaseless vigils, she fell into a refreshing slumber. Nor did she awake until the golden sunlight stole aslant

her face, startling her from a dream so filled with joyous imagery that, as she lifted her head to contemplate the features of her darling, a smile brightened her countenance, but instantly faded when she saw Mr. Bedford and Edith kneeling, and in tears, at the foot of the couch. They had feared to waken her. Wildly her glances flew from them to the still form beside her; frantically she laid both hands on his cold, white cheeks, and peered beneath the lids of the dimmed eyes; and heartrending was the cry of maternal anguish, when, calling him by every endearing name her love could suggest, he smiled not, the eyes brightened not, and no responsive word of affection stole from those serenely calm lips. Then she knew that all was over—that her child was dead.

Some months after, the vault beneath the marble pavilion at Woodreve Manor was once more unsealed; the pilgrims from the Neiderwald had *returned with their dead*. Beside the old patriot Shirley and his noble wife, their descendant, who had died so far away on the banks of the Rhine, was laid to rest. Faith and time mellowed the pangs that had wrung Mrs. Willoughby's heart, and she was wont to say, when speaking of her dead son, "We will meet again; but it will be whither he has gone, like an angel pioneer, before me. That reunion will be everlasting. My child and I will be parted no more for aye."

* * * * * * *

A few years after, the senate chamber of the capitol at Washington was crowded to suffocation, and every avenue leading to it thronged with citizens, all eager to secure places to hear a young senator, celebrated for his statesmanlike abilities and remarkable eloquence, speak on a certain question which involved the most vital principles of the Union; for, strange as it may seem, its dissolution was threatened—not by *patriots*, or for ends that would eventually serve the interests of the people; but by selfish fanatics and their mercenary partisans.

A party of elegant women, attended by several distinguished gentlemen, among whom were two noble foreigners, occupied a part of the gallery which would command a full view of the speaker when he arose to address the Senate. Among them were Mrs. Lacy, Bessie Aubry; and, further back, Mrs. Willoughby, veiled in deep mourning, and Edith, looking more than beautiful, sat together, almost screened from general observation by a massive marble pillar beside them. And those two snow-white heads, so close together, as the proud old men whisper and nod to each other, whose should they be but Mr. Bedford's and Mr. De Vere's? Another individual joins the group; high-featured, keen-eyed, and lofty in his bearing, yet with a mark of sadness on his high narrow brow that the slightly frosted raven hair could not hide. It

was the Jew—Moysa, the humane. But soon every whisper was hushed. The young senator, Henry De Vere, for it was he, had risen to address the dignified and honorable body of which he was a member. There were a gravity and dignity in every gesture and movement which commanded respectful attention ere he spoke—an expression which indicated how fraught, in his opinion, was the subject in question with results awful and critical to his country's weal. It was evident that he felt responsible to his GOD and his native land for all that might that day fall from his lips relative to the momentous subject. And as, in calm, deep-toned, and sublime eloquence, the dispassionate argument and magnanimous suggestion, proposing antidotes for the grave evil that threatened the Constitution, flowed from his lips, the attention of the oldest statesmen, and the vast crowd in attendance, was enchained as if by a spell. They knew, at once, that he was no demagogue—no idle declaimer—no smuggler of other men's ideas, under cover of rhetorical flowers—no truckler to mere party, no hair-splitting logician; but a pure-hearted, highly-gifted patriot, who would have sacrificed every human advantage, rather than one link in the bond of union which held together the sublime confederacy of his country should be broken. And while the burning coal from the altar of liberty touched his lips with wondrous eloquence, it was observed by many that the thin visage of CLAY, the beloved of his country, kindled with enthusiastic sympathy as he listened; while the deep-set eyes of the magnanimous WEBSTER glowed like orbs of fire, his heart echoed back, with responsive patriotism, the sentiments that fell from the young senator's tongue. They both felt that the country which could give birth to sons who would thus defend it in the hour of sore trial *would* and *must* be saved. Their own splendid and successful efforts, at a subsequent period, appealing, in language of impressive and overpowering eloquence, to the nation to save itself from the ruin of desolation by one united and fraternal compromise, the pages of history have preserved for posterity. We can add nothing to their fame. The archives of the longest congressional session the Republic ever knew will tell, in an after age, how they stood in the breach when the storm-tossed Constitution was almost wrecked by civil and unholy sectional feuds, and, in the name of God and Justice, preserved it intact.

It was late when Henry De Vere closed his speech, and the most distinguished personages of the Senate gathered around him to congratulate and wish him God speed in his upward career.

"Madam," inquired a noble Frenchman, of Edith, "pardon me, but may I take the liberty of inquiring the name of that very

grand and eloquent personage to whom I have listened with so much pleasure?"

"That personage, monsieur," said Edith, with the proud air of a Roman matron, "is my husband;" then, unconscious of the unsatisfactory character of her reply, she again turned her eyes toward the beloved object, that she might lose no incident of his triumph.

"And, Monsieur le Compte," whispered Mrs. Lacy, laughing at the puzzled looks of the polite foreigner whom she had on several occasions met in society, "that personage, of whom we Americans are very proud, besides being the husband of this lady, is the son of yonder old gentleman with the queue. His name is De Vere, De Vere of Woodreve." Edith smiled and apologized instantly, with sweet dignity, for her apparent inattention, and felt highly gratified by the noble Frenchman's evident appreciation of her husband's rare talents, which he expressed in voluble and elegantly-turned compliments, all enhanced by a high-bred grace of manner which is seldom met with out of *la belle* France.

"He is one of us," said a man whose bronzed face and muscular arms declared him to be a son of labor.

"Yes," replied another; "our interests will never be neglected while he lives. He's great, but not too great to carry on his manufactories and give employment and bread to hundreds."

"I wish there were a few more like him! Lord! how infinitely superior he is to these things made up by tailors and barbers, known among us as *dandies!*" said the artisan, laughing, as the three walked down the broad marble steps of the capitol.

"Mr. Bedford!" said Mrs. Lacy, that evening at Mrs. Willoughby's, where a family party were assembled, "I asked you the other day why you had never married, and you told me a beautiful story which I must suppose contained, par courtesy, a moral, about some malicious old philosopher of Greece, misnamed one of the seven wise men of that classical land, who, too much of a curmudgeon to marry himself, terrified one of his wise brethren, who was not only a Benedict, but the father of one of the handsomest, most learned and accomplished young men of his time, by a false report of that son's death. If I remember, the wicked old sinner, after enjoying his friend's anguish and affliction to his heart's content, told him very calmly that his son lived, and that it was all only a little comedy got up for his private diversion, and to illustrate forcibly his reasons for not marrying; am I not right?"

"Fudge! you have parodied the whole story—Socrates—" began Mr. Bedford.

"From Socrates may the Penates of a household graciously defend us!" laughed Mrs. Lacy. "But confess, now—confess

truly, that you would rather this day have been old father De Vere than that surly old philosopher of Greece!"

"And pray, Mrs. Lacy," asked the still gay-hearted old man, evading her close question, "*am* I not the father of the whole of you? Do ye acknowledge me, children, or not? All who do, come and give me a good-night kiss, for Mrs. Grimshaw must not be kept up late; she's getting old, poor woman."

"Cunning young gentleman!" exclaimed Mrs. Lacy; "how very thoughtful he is of old folks! But good-night; I'm afraid to say father, as I counted ten gray hairs in my head this morning." He pinched her cheek as she stooped over to kiss him.

Close and loving was the circle that gathered around him with affectionate caresses and "good-night" kisses. Mrs. Willoughby was among them, her pale sad face expressive of human feelings subdued by the chastisements and resigned to the will of Almighty God.

"A good-night kiss and a blessing too, friend and father!" she whispered, bending her knee before him. He laid his hand on her head, and blessed her fervently. And it was all well, for it was their last good-night. The next morning, with his hands folded together on his breast as if in prayer, he was found calmly sleeping—every limb and feature composed to rest—that long sleep which pilgrims who have journeyed far love to take. As among them in life he had found a home for his heart, so in death they made his resting-place among the pale sleepers beneath the family tomb at Woodreve. Devoted to charity and religion, Mrs. Willoughby's days glided by unruffled by further storms, and when her last hours drew near, it was a consolation which sweetened the bitter waves of death to reflect that, by her benevolence and munificent gifts to the Magdalen Asylum—which exhibited in its finely-sculptured marble portals a monument of her commiseration and pity for the erring—many a soul, otherwise despairing, had been rescued, sheltered, and restored to the pursuit of virtue.

Over the portals of the Magdalen may be seen the picture of the Divine Saviour, forgiving her who had "sinned much;" and on each side, the sculptured images of the angels of mercy in their niches, lifting from the dust a soul fainting beneath the burthen of its crimes; then serenely conducting it, regenerated and chastened, heavenward. These had been executed after Vernon's design in Florence, during the pilgrimage of the Willoughbys in Europe.

There, in the humble garb of a sister penitent, Amy Markham is spending the residue of her life in practical works of religion and charity towards those who, like herself, had fallen and repented. Once more she visited her early home, but it was meekly to im-

plore the forgiveness of her sorrow-stricken and dying parents, while she watered their pillows with tears of penitence. With their last breath they forgave and blessed her; then, with a heart more at peace, she returned to the refuge whither she had been led and saved in the hour of her wildest despair.

Mrs. De Vere had the proud satisfaction of seeing Alice wedded at last to Col. Forsyth, and, surrounded by her family, who were distinguished for all those rare virtues which give to life its true worth, and friends who occupied a noble position in society, sustained by their own excellence and intelligence more than by wealth or fashion, she enjoyed uninterrupted happiness, and ceased entirely to regret the garish splendors and fictitious pleasures of Chiswicke Square.

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The style is clear and comprehensive, and the book may be relied upon for historical accuracy, as the materials have been drawn from sources the most authentic. The Conversations of Napoleon, with Montholon, Gourgaud, Las Cases and Dr. O'Meara have all been consulted as the true basis upon which the lives of Napoleon and his commanders under him should be founded.

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